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MINORITIES IN THE
ARAB WORLD

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MINORITIES IN THE ARAB WORLD

By
A. H. HOURANI

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PREFACE

THIS study in its present form was completed in the first half of 1945, and in general does not touch upon events which have occurred since then. It is not to be regarded as a definitive work, but rather as a tentative introduction to a subject which has not yet been dealt with fully and objectively.

The study was prepared at the request of the Cairo Group of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. I wish to thank the Group for placing at my disposal two reports on the Copts and Assyrians, written by Mr. S. A. Morrison and Canon F. C. Bridgeman respectively. I am also grateful to the Palestine Department of Statistics for supplying the figures in Chapter VI, and to a number of friends and colleagues who have read and improved parts or the whole of the manuscript.

A. H. H.

CAIRO,
1946

CONTENTS

PREFACE	v
CHAPTER I. A GENERAL SURVEY	i
DEFINITION—LIST OF MINORITIES—NOTES ON THIS LIST— THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES—THE MOSLEM COMMUNITIES— OTHER RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES—LINGUISTIC AND RACIAL MINORITIES—GENERAL STATISTICS—NOTES ON THESE STATISTICS	
CHAPTER II. THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF MINORITIES	15
-ORIGIN OF MINORITIES—POLITICAL IDEAS—ISLAM—THE OTTO- MAN EMPIRE—THE <i>MILLET</i> SYSTEM—THE SOCIAL POSITION OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS—THE CLOSED COMMUNITY	
CHAPTER III. THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	23
THE POLITICAL INTERVENTION OF THE WEST—THE IMPACT OF THE WEST ON SOCIETY—THE SPREAD OF WESTERN CULTURE—THE REFORM OF THE OTTOMAN GOVERNMENT—LEBANESE AUTONOMY— THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT—THE RISE OF NATIONALISM IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE—EGYPTIAN NATIONALISM	
CHAPTER IV. CHANGES SINCE THE FIRST WORLD WAR	33
CHANGES IN FORMS OF GOVERNMENT—THE GROWTH OF ARAB AND EGYPTIAN NATIONALISM—THE INFLUENCE OF TURKEY AND RUSSIA—FEARS AND ASPIRATIONS OF MINORITIES—MINORITY NATIONALISM—SOCIAL CHANGES	
CHAPTER V. EGYPT	40
DISTRIBUTION OF MINORITIES—WRITTEN GUARANTEES—PERSONAL STATUS—THE ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT—NATIONALISM AND THE MINORITIES—THE COPTS: HISTORY—THE COPTS: SOCIAL POSITION—THE COPTS AND THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT —THE SYRIANS—THE ARMENIANS—THE JEWS—NOTE ON SOME FOREIGN COMMUNITIES	
CHAPTER VI. PALESTINE	52
DISTRIBUTION OF MINORITIES—WRITTEN GUARANTEES—COM- MUNAL ORGANIZATION—THE ARAB CHRISTIANS: ECONOMIC POSITION—THE ARAB CHRISTIANS: EDUCATIONAL POSITION— THE ARAB-JERUSALEM AND THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT—OTHER MINORITIES	
CHAPTER VII. TRANSJORDAN	59
DISTRIBUTION OF MINORITIES—WRITTEN GUARANTEES—SOCIAL POSITION	

CONTENTS

vii

CHAPTER VIII. THE LEVANT STATES	61
THE MANDATE—FRENCH POLICY	
CHAPTER IX. LEBANON	63
DISTRIBUTION OF MINORITIES—WRITTEN GUARANTEES—PERSONAL STATUS AND COMMUNAL ORGANIZATION—SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE COMMUNITIES—THE ARMENIANS—EDUCATIONAL DIFFERENCES—CHRISTIANS AND MOSLEMS—GREATER AND SMALL LEBANON—FRENCH POLICY—SECTARIANISM IN POLITICS—POLITICAL CONCEPTIONS—DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1941	
CHAPTER X. SYRIA	75
DISTRIBUTION OF MINORITIES—WRITTEN GUARANTEES—PERSONAL STATUS AND COMMUNAL ORGANIZATION—DIVISIONS OF THE COUNTRY—JEBEL DRUZE—THE TERRITORY OF THE ALAWIS—THE JAZIRAI—THE ARAB CHRISTIANS—THE ARMENIANS—OTHER MINORITIES—FRENCH POLICY—NATIONALISM AND THE MINORITIES—THE TREATY OF 1936 AND THE MINORITIES—DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1941	
CHAPTER XL IRAQ	91
DISTRIBUTION OF MINORITIES—WRITTEN GUARANTEES—PERSONAL STATUS AND COMMUNAL ORGANIZATION—THE MINORITIES AND THE IRAQI STATE—THE KURDS : DESCRIPTION—THE KURDS UNDER THE MANDATE—THE KURDS SINCE THE TREATY—THE ASSYRIANS—THE OTHER CHRISTIANS—THE JEWS—OTHER MINORITIES	
CHAPTER XII. CHANGES DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR	106
POLITICAL TENDENCIES—THE COLLAPSE OF FRANCE—THE RISE OF RUSSIA—ALLIED PROMISES—THE SENSE OF CHANGE	
CHAPTER XIII. CONCLUSIONS—(i)	109
THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM—ESSENTIAL GUARANTEES FOR MINORITIES—FOREIGN RULE—INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES—CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES—THE <i>MILLET</i> SYSTEM—THE COPTS—THE DRUZES AND ALAWIS—THE KURDS OF IRAQ—THE PROBLEM OF LEBANON—THE JAZIRAI—THE ARMENIANS AND ASSYRIANS	
CHAPTER XIV. CONCLUSIONS—(ii)	119
THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION—THE SUPRA-NATIONAL STATE—THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONALISM—ASSIMILATION—AUTONOMY—ARAB UNION—SOCIAL CHANGE—THE SPIRIT OF ISLAM—A ' FRUITFUL TENSION '	
INDEX	131

MAPS

These will be found at the end of the book on pages 126-130.

THE EASTERN ARAB WORLD

SYRIA AND TRANSJORDAN

PALESTINE AND LEBANON

IRAQ

EGYPT

Chapter One

A GENERAL SURVEY

Definition

THE countries with which this study is concerned are Egypt, Palestine, Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. All of them formed part of the Ottoman Empire for many centuries, and the majority of their population is Arabic in language and therefore to a great extent in culture. Moreover, if they are taken as a whole the majority of their population is Sunni (Orthodox) Moslem by faith. There are, however, a number of communities which have long resided in these countries, or in other parts of the Middle East before they came to these countries, and most of whose members possess their legal nationality, but which are not Sunni Moslem by faith, although they are Arabic-speaking ; there are others which are Sunni Moslem but not Arabic-speaking, and others again which are neither Sunni nor Arab. It is to these communities that the term ' minorities ' refers.

List of Minorities

The minorities are almost innumerable, but some of them have very few adherents and little political importance. The following are the most important:

- A. Sunni Moslems, but not Arabic-speaking :
 - (i) Kurds.
 - (2) Turcomans.
 - (3) Caucasians : Circassians, Chechens.
- B. Arabic-speaking, but not Sunni Moslems :
 - I. Heterodox Moslems :
 - (1) Shi'is.
 - (2) Alawis.
 - (3) Isma'ilis.
 - (4) Druzes.
 - II. Christians:
 - (1) Greek Orthodox.
 - (2) Syrian Orthodox (Jacobites).
 - (3) Coptic Orthodox.

- (4) Nestorians (Assyrians).
- (5) Roman Catholics of the Latin rite.
- (6) Maronites.
- (7) Greek Catholics.
- (8) Coptic Catholics.
- (9) Syrian Catholics.
- (10) Chaldaean Catholics.
- (11) Protestants: Anglicans, Presbyterians, etc.

III. Jews and semi-Judaic Sects :

- (1) Rabbanite.
- (2) Karaites.
- (3) Samaritans.

IV. Other religions:

- (1) Yazidis.
- (2) Mandaean.
- (3) Shabak.
- (4) Baha'is.

C. Neither Arabic-speaking nor Sunni Moslems :

- (1) Persian-speaking : Shi'is.
Baha'is.
Jews.
- (2) Kurdish-speaking : Yazidis.
Shabak.
Alawis.
Syrian Orthodox.
Syrian Catholics.
Jews.
- (3) Syriac-speaking : Nestorians (Assyrians).
Chaldaean Catholics.
Syrian Orthodox
(Jacobites).
Syrian Catholics.
- (4) Armenian-speaking : Armenian Orthodox
(Gregorians).
Armenian Catholics.
Armenian Protestants.
- (5) Hebrew-speaking: Jews.
- (6) Jews speaking various European languages:
Yiddish, Spanish,
Italian, etc.

Notes on this List :

(1) It will be noticed that there are a number of anomalies in this list: certain communities appear more than once—e.g. the Syrian Orthodox and Catholics are shown as speaking Arabic, Kurdish and Syriac. This is inevitable in a region like the Middle East where a number of communities live in close contact with one another in a particular district; where different sections of a community are widely separated from one another; and where multi-lingualism is common.

(2) For the sake of completeness the European Jews in Palestine are included in this list and in the general remarks and tables which follow. They do not, however, fall strictly within the definition, because they have come to Palestine from Europe in the last few decades. Moreover, the problems to which their presence has given rise are too vast and complicated to be regarded as minority-problems; they will not, therefore, be dealt with in the body of this study.

(3) The position of the Shi'is in Iraq is also different from that of any of the other communities. They form the largest single community in the country; for although the total number of Sunnis is greater, they are divided into Arabs and Kurds. In a sense they constitute a minority: if the Arab countries are taken as a whole, they are certainly in a minority; and even in Iraq they have something of the relation of a minority towards the Government, which is mainly in the hands of Sunnis. But the problem of Sunnis and Shi'is in Iraq also is too vast and fundamental to be regarded as simply a minority-problem, and will not therefore be dealt with in this study.

The Christian Communities

The Christian communities mentioned in the list may be divided into five main groups:

(1) *The Greek Orthodox*: i.e. the adherents of the Orthodox Eastern Church, which in reality is a group of autocephalous Churches using the Byzantine rite. Historically these Churches grew out of the four Eastern Patriarchates (Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople) which, from an early date, tended to diverge from the Western Patriarchate of Rome for a number of reasons. The final split took place in the eleventh century; from that time, with the exception of a brief period of reunion in the fifteenth century, the Eastern Church has continued

to reject the claim of the Roman Patriarchate to universal supremacy. Doctrinally the main point at issue between the Eastern and Western Churches is that of the Procession of the Holy Ghost; but there are also various divergences in ritual and discipline (e.g. the married priesthood).

The Orthodox of the countries with which this study deals are subject to the jurisdiction of three out of the four Eastern Patriarchates. That of Antioch is almost wholly Arab as regards hierarchy, laity and liturgy; in that of Jerusalem the upper clergy are Greek, the lower clergy and most of the laity Arab; in that of Alexandria there are both Greek and Arab elements (the Patriarch of Antioch now resides at Damascus, the Patriarch of Alexandria at Cairo).

(2) *The Nestorians.* The Nestorian Church grew out of the Christological controversies of the fifth century. The Antioch school of theologians emphasized the distinction between the Logos and the man Jesus to the point of obscuring the real union between them. Their doctrine was condemned by the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431), but continued to find adherents in Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia, where, for reasons not wholly theological, a strong Nestorian Church grew up. It sent out missions across Asia as far as China. Mother-church and missions, however, were largely destroyed by Tamerlane in the fourteenth century; to-day the Assyrians of Iraq and Syria are all that is left of them.

Doctrinally, the distinguishing mark of the Nestorian Church is its rejection of the statements of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon (A.D. 451) on the nature of Christ. It has an independent ecclesiastical organization, with a Patriarch, the Mar Shimun, as its head; formerly his residence was in Northern Iraq, but since the Assyrian incident of 1933 he has been in exile. The Church also has a distinctive Syriac liturgy.

(3) *The Monophysites.* The Monophysite doctrine represents a reaction against Nestorianism. It emphasizes the union between Christ and the man Jesus to the point of maintaining that Christ has not only one Person but also one Nature, a divine one. Formally condemned by the Council of Chalcedon, this doctrine continued to exist, particularly in Egypt and Syria, where the Monophysite movement had something of the character of a separatist revolt against the Byzantine Government and Church. Eventually the Monophysites formed independent

Churches, which were placed on a level with the Greek Orthodox Church by the Arabs in the seventh century.

There are three Monophysite Churches in the Arab countries :

(a) The Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt. This rejects the profession of faith drawn up at Chalcedon and all ecclesiastical authorities except its own Patriarch of Alexandria, now resident at Cairo. It has a distinctive liturgy in Greek, Coptic and Arabic.

(b) The Jacobite or Syrian Orthodox Church, which was revived and organized by James Baradaï (after whom it was named) in the sixth century. Its doctrinal position is the same as that of the Copts, but it has its own Syriac liturgy and an independent hierarchy under a Patriarch of Antioch, whose seat was formerly Mardin and is now Horns.

(c) The Armenian Orthodox or 'Gregorian' Church was organized in the third century and became autocephalous as a national church in the fourth. In the sixth century it rejected the formulations of Chalcedon and adopted a form of Monophysitism which is slightly different from that of the Copts and Syrian Orthodox. The Armenian Orthodox Church is still a national church, to be found wherever Armenians live. It has an organization which is in some ways unique; five Patriarchs, of whom the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin in Soviet Armenia is the most exalted; and an Armenian liturgy.

An offshoot of Monophysitism was the Monothelete doctrine, that Christ possesses both a divine and a human Nature but only a divine Will. After being favoured for political reasons by the Emperor Heraclius in the seventh century, this doctrine was condemned by the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 680. It then survived only among the Maronites of Lebanon, who themselves abandoned it in the twelfth century.

(4) *The Roman Catholic and Uniate Churches.* These fall into two classes :

(a) The Roman Catholics of the Western or Latin rite, fully a part of the Roman Catholic Church and subject to the direct jurisdiction of its hierarchy. There is a Roman Catholic Patriarch in Jerusalem and Apostolic Delegates in Beirut, Cairo and Baghdad.

(b) The Uniate Churches: i.e. Churches or members of Churches which were formerly heretical or schismatic in Roman eyes, but which at some time in the past abjured those doctrines

which the Roman Church regards as heretical and acknowledged the Papal supremacy. They were allowed to retain their own Oriental rights and customs (e.g. the marriage of parish priests, although this is becoming rare in practice), and were granted autonomy under their own elected Patriarchs. In general they are very jealous of these privileges. Their relations with the Vatican were formerly in the hands of the Congregation of Propaganda, but are now in those of the Eastern Congregation. Six Uniate Churches exist in the Arab countries :

(i) The Greek Catholic Church: ex-Greek Orthodox. Greek liturgy ; Patriarch of Alexandria, resident in Cairo.

(ii) The Syrian Catholic Church: ex-Syrian Orthodox. Syriac liturgy; Patriarch of Antioch, resident in Beirut. (The present Patriarch is a Cardinal.)

(iii) The Armenian Catholic Church: ex-Armenian Orthodox. Armenian liturgy; Patriarch of Constantinople, resident near Beirut, and recently created a Cardinal.

(iv) The Chaldaean Catholic Church : ex-Nestorian. Syriac liturgy ; Patriarch of Babylon, resident in Mosul.

(v) The Coptic Catholic Church: ex-Coptic Orthodox. Arabic liturgy; it has no Patriarch at present, but a Bishop resident in Cairo.

(vi) The Maronite Church: ex-Monothelite. Syriac liturgy ; Patriarch of Antioch, resident in Lebanon.

It may be noted that the Maronite Church differs from the others in that it accepted Papal supremacy as a whole, while the others have been built up out of individual members of other Churches still existing, who acknowledged the Roman supremacy as a result of the activities of Catholic missions or for other reasons.

(5) *The Protestants*, the fruit of the labours of missionaries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Most of the missions are English and American, although there are or were also a few from other European nations. The Protestants are divided into a number of groups, the most important being Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Anglicans ; but there are also many minor European and American sects represented among them.

The Moslem Communities

(1) The Orthodox Sunni Moslems are those who regard the

Quran supplemented by the Traditions of the Prophet as the sole and sufficient repository of the Moslem faith. They do not recognize the need for a priesthood to mediate the faith to believers, or for an infallible interpretation of the holy writings. Thus they have no Church and no liturgy in the real sense. It may be said that they stand for the original simplicity of Islam not only against accretions but even against developments.

Historically they spring from the struggle for the succession to Muhammad. They regard the headship of the Islamic community as having passed from the Prophet to the 'Orthodox' Caliphs, Abu Bekr, Umar, Uthman and Ali, and then to the Umayyads; and they look on the Caliphs as temporal rulers only, with no supernatural power or excellence.

(2) *Sh'Vis*. The split between Sunnis and Shi'is began in the first century of Islam, with the struggle for the Caliphate between Ali ibn abu Talib, the Prophet's son-in-law, and Muawiya ibn abu Sufian. The partisans of Ali, the 'Shi'ah', clung to his cause even after his death (A.D. 661) and that of his son Husain (A.D. 680). Moulded into a compact unit by the persecutions to which Umayyads and Abbasids alike subjected them, they have preserved throughout the centuries the distinctive features which differentiate them from the orthodox Sunnis.

Their most obvious characteristic is the cult of the Prophet's family in general, and particularly of Ali, or rather of the legendary figure which has been constructed round the historical Ali. They believe that the Imamate, the combined spiritual and secular leadership of Islam, passed from the Prophet to Ali, in whose family it then inhered. The Imam is the interpreter of law and doctrine, and as such infallible and impeccable; and loyalty to him is regarded as the sixth pillar of Islam.

The majority of Shi'is believe that the line of Imams died out with the twelfth, Muhammad, who disappeared during the ninth century A.D. and has since been 'hidden', until such time as he shall reappear to rule the world and give his faithful adherents their due. But the Zaidis of al-Yemen recognize three of these Imams only, and the Isma'ilis six.

(3) *Alawis*. These are also known as 'Nusairis', and have a religion which possesses many of the characteristics of dissident Islam, but many non-Islamic elements as well. Like that of the Druzes, it originated through the desire of the indigenous inhabitants of the Syrian hill-country to preserve their solidarity and

distinctiveness, while at the same time outwardly conforming to the beliefs of the rulers of the country.

From Paganism (either directly or by way of Isma'ilism) the Nusairis took over the idea of a Divine Triad, of its successive incarnations in the seven cycles of world-history, and of the transmigration of souls. From Shi'i Islam they adopted and exaggerated the cult of Ali, whom they regard as the incarnation of the Divinity; and from Isma'ilism the idea of an esoteric teaching hidden from the masses and revealed only to the initiates after a complex process of initiation. From Christianity they appear to have derived much of the ritual, the possession of which distinguishes them from other Islamic or post-Islamic sects.

(4) *IsmcCilis*. These split off from the Shi'is in the eighth century over the question of the succession to the Imamate. They maintain that the genuine line was continued through Isma'il, the eldest son of the sixth Imam, while the Shi'is recognize Isma'il's brother Musa and his descendants.

The Isma'ilis carried further two tendencies inherent in Shi'ism. First they insisted on the necessity of an esoteric teaching placed above human discussion and dispensed to a chosen body of initiates by the Imam. They developed a body of philosophical doctrines which took them very far from Islam. These doctrines—of emanation, incarnation, revelation and transmigration—need not be dealt with here.

Secondly, they insisted on the duty of blind obedience to the Imam. The habit of devotion thus formed among them was more than once used by ambitious individuals and groups for their own aggrandizement or for purposes of political revolution. The founders of Neo-Isma'ilism (the 'Assassins') in the eleventh century went so far as to preach complete scepticism for the initiated, and cynically to exploit the religious beliefs of the faithful for worldly purposes. They troubled the Near East for some generations, until their strongholds were destroyed by the Mongols in the thirteenth century.

(5) *Druzes*. The religion of the Druzes may be regarded as an off-shoot of Isma'ilism. Historically it springs from the Fatimite Caliph of Egypt, Hakim (A.D. 996-1020), who gave himself out to be the final incarnation of the deity; his followers Hamza and Darazi spread this doctrine, with an elaborate scaffolding of Isma'ili philosophy, among the inhabitants of Southern

Lebanon, and founded among them a sect whom the outside world called 'Druzes' and they themselves 'Unitarians'. They believe that Hakim, the last incarnation of God, is not dead but will return; they also believe, with the Isma'ilis, in emanations of the deity, in supernatural hierarchies and in the transmigration of souls. They practise systematic concealment of their beliefs, which are not known fully even to all the Druzes, but only to the initiates among them.

Other Religious Communities

(1) *The Yazidis* are often defined as 'Devil-worshippers', but this is inaccurate. They regard Satan as a fallen angel who will some day be reconciled with God, and take considerable pains to propitiate him. They symbolize him by a sacred peacock. They regard the Old and New Testaments and the Quran as Sacred Books, and their rites show signs of Christian, Moslem and Magian influences. They are a racial as well as a religious minority, being probably of Kurdish origin. They speak a Kurdish dialect, but use Arabic in their rites. The centre of their religion is at Shaikh Adi, north of Mosul.

(2) *The Mandaean*s are also known as Sabaeans or 'Christians of St. John'. The doctrines of their religion are not very different from those of Islam, with certain accretions from other religions. Although they speak Arabic in daily life, they use a distinctive language for liturgical and other religious purposes. Ritual ablutions play an important part in the practice of their faith, which also enjoins upon them vegetarianism and pacifism.

(3) *The Shabak* are a community of Kurdish origin who live in the same area as the Yazidis and are not clearly differentiated from them. Their religion is compounded of Yazidi and extreme Shi'i elements.

(4) *The Bahá'ís* profess the doctrine first expounded by a Persian religious reformer, the Bab, in 1844 and amplified by his successors. Persecuted in Persia, they transferred their headquarters to Palestine and sent out missionaries as far as America; the great majority of them, however, are still to be found in Persia. They believe in a progressive and unending succession of revelations, each leading man nearer to the incomprehensible nature of God; but on the whole their preaching is directed more towards ethics than towards the elaboration of a systematic theology.

(5) *The Jews* may be divided into orthodox Jews and semi-Judaic sects:

(i) The orthodox or *Rabbanite Jews* are those whose religious beliefs are based upon the Old Testament as interpreted and applied in the Talmud. Judaism has no official creed and therefore no division into sects or Churches. There are, however, certain differences of practice and tradition between the *Ashkenazi* or Yiddish-speaking Jews from Europe who have immigrated into Palestine and elsewhere in recent decades ; the *Sephardic* or Spanish-speaking Jews whose ancestors were expelled from Spain in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries ; and the various Oriental communities, long resident in the Arab countries with which this book deals, or immigrants from North Africa, the Yemen, Persia and Central Asia.

(ii) *The Karaites* split off from the main body of Judaism in the eighth century A.D. Their sect originated in Baghdad and gradually spread into Syria, Egypt and the Crimea. They aimed at returning to primitive Judaism by going behind the Talmud and oral tradition to the Scriptures ; accordingly they rejected the claims of the Rabbis to interpret the Scriptures. They also differ from the Rabbanite Jews on various points of conduct.

(iii) *The Samaritans* accept only the Pentateuch and claim to be the repositories of orthodox Judaism. They do not acknowledge the claims of the priesthood, and gradually developed their own theology and tradition. Until the time of the Maccabees their relations with the Jews were very close but subsequently they became hostile. In recent centuries they have become almost extinct. Their religious practices are based solely upon the Mosaic law and differ considerably from those of the Jews. Their language, a dialect of Aramaic, is no longer used ; Hebrew is now the liturgical, Arabic the popular and literary language. Part of their religious literature is still extant.

Linguistic and Racial Minorities :

The following are the most important languages spoken by the linguistic and racial minorities :

- (1) *Turkish,*
- (2) *Persian.*

(3) *Hebrew* is spoken in a revived and modernized form by the immigrant Jews in Palestine. A large number of other languages

are also spoken by the Palestinian Jews, some of them European or Asiatic languages and others, such as *Yiddish*, specifically Jewish.

(4) *Armenian* is an Indo-European language with a highly developed literature and tradition. The homeland of the Armenian people lies in and to the south of the Caucasus, in what are now Turkey and the U.S.S.R. They have a continuous history as a national entity in this homeland since ancient times. From the early Christian centuries the centre of their history and tradition has been the Gregorian Church, and their classical literature is mainly one of Christian devotion. In course of time they spread as peasants and merchants throughout Asia Minor and beyond. Their settlements in Asia Minor have been largely destroyed by the great massacres of the last two generations, but they still have communities in the Balkans, the Americas, several of the Arab countries and elsewhere ; the largest community, that in the Caucasus, is now a Soviet Socialist Republic, self-governing in political affairs and the centre of a flourishing Armenian culture.

(5) *Kurdish* is not a unified language but a group of dialects differing widely among themselves and akin to Persian. These dialects are spoken by a number of Moslem tribes, scarcely united enough to be called a nation, whose main centre since the earliest recorded times has been the mountain-region of Eastern Anatolia, usually called Kurdistan. They are divided to-day between Turkey, Persia, Iraq, Syria and the U.S.S.R. They have little written literature or national history, and have never possessed a national state, although powerful local dynasties have arisen at different times in various parts of Kurdistan.

(6) *Syriac* is a Semitic language which was once current in a number of forms in the Fertile Crescent and neighbouring regions ; its western form is known as Aramaic. It was both a vernacular and a literary language with a rich theological literature. For a long time after the Islamic conquest Syriac-speaking Christians played an important part in the development of Arab culture ; but gradually Syriac gave way to Arabic. It now survives as a spoken language only among certain Christian communities on the northern edge of the Fertile Crescent; as a written language in the liturgies of certain Eastern Churches. Aramaic is spoken only in a few villages near Damascus.

(7) A number of *Caucasian* dialects are spoken by immigrants

who came into the Arab world from the Caucasus in the nineteenth century. Driven from their homes by the extension of Russian rule, they were settled by the Turkish Government on the edge of the Syrian Desert. The most important of these groups are the Circassians and Chechens.

General Statistics

Detailed figures of the numbers and distribution of the minorities will be given in subsequent chapters, but it will be convenient to give some general statistics here :

TABLE I

Principal Minorities in Each Country

(round figures)

1. EGYPT	(i) Copts	about 1,000,000
	(ii) Other Christians	250,000
	(iii) Jews	60,000
	(iv) Total minorities	1,500,000
	(v) Total population	17,000,000
2. PALESTINE	(i) Jews	550,000
	(ii) Christians	125,000
	(iii) Others	15,000
	(iv) Total minorities	700,000
	(v) Total population	1,700,000
3. TRANSJORDAN	(i) Total minorities	40,000
	(ii) Total population	500,000
4. LEBANON	(i) Shi'is	200,000
	(ii) Druzes	75,000
	(iii) Maronites	325,000
	(iv) Greek Orthodox	100,000
	(v) Armenians (Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants)	75,000
	(vi) Other Christians	80,000
	(vii) Others	10,000
	(viii) Total minorities	850,000
	(ix) Total population	1,100,000
5. SYRIA	(i) Alawis	325,000
	(ii) Druzes	90,000
	(iii) Kurds	250,000
	(iv) Greek Orthodox	135,000
	(v) Armenians	120,000
	(vi) Other Christians	150,000
	(vii) Others	120,000
	(viii) Total minorities	1,200,000
	(ix) Total population	2,800,000

6. IRAQ	(i) shris	2,000,000
	(ii) Kurds	800,000
	(iii) Turcomans	75,000
	(iv) Christians	100,000
	(v) Jews	100,000
	(vi) Others	100,000
	(vii) Total minorities	3,200,000
	(viii) Total population	4,500,000

TABLE II

Principal Minorities in the Region as a Whole

i .	Copts	1,000,000
2.	Greek Orthodox	300,000
3.	Uniate Christians	600,000
4 .	Armenians	250,000
5.	Other Christians	300,000
	<i>Total Christians</i>	2,500,000
6 .	Shi'is	2,250,000
7 .	Alawis	350,000
8.	Other Heterodox Moslems	250,000
	<i>Total Heterodox Moslems</i>	3,000,000
9 .	Kurds	1,000,000
10.	Other Moslem linguistic minorities	250,000
	<i>Total Moslem linguistic minorities</i>	1,250,000
11.	Jews	750,000
12.	Other minorities	100,000
	<i>Total minorities</i>	7,500,000
	<i>Total population</i>	28,000,000

Notes on these Statistics

1. The figures given in these tables are drawn, for the most part, from official sources, but they should not be regarded as very accurate. With the exception of Palestine, the governments of the Arab countries do not possess an adequate organization for gathering statistics; and the populations still have too great a fear of conscription and taxation to submit willingly to being numbered.

2. It is clear that the structure of Iraq and Lebanon differs from that of the other countries. In the latter, there is a clear Sunni Arabic-speaking majority, in Egypt and Transjordan a very large one, but in Palestine and Syria it is not so large. In Iraq, however, there are three communities—Sunni Arabs, Shi'i Arabs and Kurds—none of which is preponderant enough to dominate the other two, and which have complex relations with

one another : the Sunni Arabs are bound to the Shi'is by language, to the Kurds by religion. In Lebanon there are a number of sects, Christian and Moslem, none of which has an absolute majority nor even a large enough relative majority to dominate the rest. The population is about evenly divided between Christians and Moslems; and Lebanon is the only one of the six countries in which the Sunnis do not possess a majority.

3. A distinction should be made between communities which are wholly (or almost wholly) included in one or other of these countries or in the six taken as a whole, and those which extend far beyond their borders, and whose religious or national centre in some cases lies in some other part of the world. For example, Shi'is are to be found also in Persia and India, Isma'ilis in India and East Africa; Kurds in Turkey, Persia and the U.S.S.R. ; Turcomans in Turkey, Persia and throughout the Central Asiatic regions of the U.S.S.R. ; Armenians in the Caucasus, Persia and scattered throughout the world ; Caucasians in the U.S.S.R. ; Baha'is in Persia and elsewhere ; Karaites in the Crimea.

4. A further distinction may be made between 'compact' and 'scattered' minorities. The former are those whose members in any particular country are mainly concentrated in a particular district in which they form a local majority ; the latter are those which are divided between a number of regions. The most important compact minorities are the Kurds in Iraq, the Druzes and Alawis in Syria, and the Maronites in Lebanon.

Chapter Two

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF MINORITIES

Origin of Minorities

WHY are there so many religions and linguistic minorities in these countries? To answer this question fully would involve raising profound metaphysical issues: the cause, nature and necessity of man's diversity. On a more superficial level of 'historical explanation', the following factors should be noticed:

(i) The Arabian peninsula and the surrounding regions have always been peculiarly fertile in religious conceptions. It was here that the conceptions of the One God, the Personal God, the Revealed God and the Incarnate God first broke in on man's mind. Different prophets and teachers: various efforts to work out the implications and 'system' of these conceptions: attempts to reconcile them with Greek philosophy, pagan nature-worship and religious systems from Persia and India—all these factors have led to a great diversity of faiths. The same intensity of affirmation and denial which caused this diversity also ensured that each of the faiths should find adherents who clung to it through the generations.

(ii) The variety of linguistic and racial groups may be explained by another factor: the Middle East has always been a centre and terminus of movement, tribal and individual. Some groups have come from Central Asia by way of the Persian plateau (for example, Turks, Kurds and Mongols); others from the Mediterranean basin, by sea or by way of Anatolia; others again « in endless successive waves from the Arabian peninsula, both before and after what is usually called the Arab conquest.

The motives of these incursions have been various. Sometimes the purpose has been conquest: to use these countries as bases for attack or defence, or to subjugate them for the sake of their geographical position, their wealth or the skill of their artisans. More particularly, they have been desired as gateways to the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf and thus to some of the greatest trade and strategic routes in the world. Also there has been the motive of pillage: an attraction alike

for the nomads, eager for the produce of the cultivated lands, and for kings, greedy for the wealth of the cities. Again, the cities have always drawn traders and artisans to them, whether it was Alexandria and Antioch under the Romans, Damascus, Baghdad and Basra under the Arabs or Cairo and once more Alexandria in recent generations. Finally, at times religious or political persecution has driven refugees in larger or smaller numbers from surrounding regions into the countries with which this study deals, or else from one part of those countries to another.

These movements have been facilitated by the existence during long periods of great Empires including some or all of the Arab countries and others besides, and within which the conditions for free movement existed.

(iii) Often these two factors worked together: tribal and national differences took on a religious colouring. There were conflicts and tensions, or at least consciousness of difference, between different waves of immigration, tribes or peoples coming from different points of the compass, or from different parts of Arabia. Sometimes these differences expressed themselves, and were in turn perpetuated, by religious divisions.

(iv) To sectarianism and tribalism a third factor was often added: this was localism, an intense local loyalty which preserved and strengthened religious and linguistic differences. In certain regions, localism is encouraged by the geographical structure. This is particularly true of the mountains and valleys of Lebanon and Kurdistan, easily defensible, off the main routes of war and trade, and not worth the while of governments to control and penetrate. Another cause of localism was the deficiency of communications. With some exceptions, for example the Roman period, roads were badly kept up, law and order were almost wholly absent outside the coasts and river-valleys and means of transport were scarce. Thus the tendency to uniformity was very limited; groups could live their own life and develop their own community. (But this is less true of Egypt, where the Nile links together practically all the habitable regions, since almost all of them lie along its course.)

Political Ideas

Once a minority had come into existence or had entered this region from elsewhere, it was helped to preserve its distinctive character and life by the political conceptions which prevailed

there. For long periods of history the State or Empire which dominated the Middle East was supra-national, based on loyalty to the person of the ruler ; different national groups (and at times different religious groups also) found a sort of equality in a like subjection to him. Then again, the activities of the State were very limited. In extent they were mainly confined to the towns, coasts, river-valleys and more accessible plains ; communities which did not wish to be subjects of a State could withdraw to less accessible regions and live there undisturbed. Moreover, the Government confined itself to a small number of the functions which it performs to-day : it defended the country, maintained a sort of law and order, raised taxes and preserved the true religion (it was only for short periods that it tried seriously to impose this religion on all its subjects). There were vast spheres of social and individual life with which the Government did not try to interfere, and which could therefore be regulated by the customs of one's nation or the precepts of one's religion.

Again, except in Byzantine times, there was very little of a bureaucracy. The Government imposed its will in the provinces by feudal delegation ; as always in feudal countries, its power of creating feudatories was limited, and it was compelled to adjust itself to the facts of social power, to accept the existing leaders of tribes or communities and to deal with the individual members of the community through their leaders only, not directly. It was even in the Government's interest to have a large number of separate communities to play with ; it was a partial guarantee against revolt, for if one community was restless and disaffected another could be turned against it.

Islam

Another factor which helped to preserve diversity was the attitude of Islam, on the one hand towards other religions and on the other towards nationality.

Islam recognizes three categories of human beings: first Moslems, secondly 'Protected people' (Ahl al-Dhimmah) or 'People of the Book' (Ahl al-Kitab) and thirdly polytheists or pagans. With the third category there can be no compromise, but the second—those who believe in God, the Day of Judgment and the Prophets—are to be accorded toleration and protection in the Islamic state. They are outside the full community of the State, since in principle the State is theocratic, and they have

certain disabilities : they must pay a special tax and are not allowed to carry arms, to give evidence against Moslems in the courts of law or to marry Moslem women. But they are allowed to retain their own religious organization, personal status, places of worship and religious trusts.

To a great extent these principles have actually been observed in the Moslem treatment of Christians and Jews, the ' Peoples of the Book '. There have been periods of persecution, but on the whole there has been no attempt to exterminate them nor, except in Abbasid times, to convert them forcibly (although very many of them did become Moslem in course of time): indeed for the Nestorians and Monophysites Moslem rule meant greater tolerance than they had received from orthodox Byzantium. The intolerance of orthodox Islam was directed more against the Shi'is and the sects on the fringes of Islam than against Christians and Jews. It is clear, however, that minorities living amidst a sea of Moslems could not help being deeply affected by the way of life of the majority. For the most part they became Arabic in language and thus also to a great extent in culture ; they were also to a certain degree Islamized in their social life and popular ethics (this is particularly true of the Copts in Egypt). This process of assimilation, and the difficulty of retaining something of their own life and thought amidst an alien world, were perhaps as hard to endure as persecution would have been.

As for nationality, Islam in principle recognizes no nations. The community of Islam is open to all, on condition that they profess the doctrines of Islam: tribal and national differences are secondary. It is true that there was at the beginning a distinction between the Arabs, who had brought Islam from the peninsula and spread it in the world, and the * Mawali', the Arâbized inhabitants of the new Islamic provinces; and that after time had eradicated this distinction there continued to be jealousy and conflict between ' Arabs ' (now defined not by racial origin but by language and culture) and other linguistic groups which had accepted Islam but preserved their own languages and traditions except in matters of religion. The former claimed a special relation to Islam and the Arabic Quran, the latter often regarded themselves as superior in civilization or manliness. In spite of such divisions, however, in general it is true to say that there was a formal equality of national groups inside Islam, and that this made for racial toleration in practice. There was

a continual process of individual assimilation from one group to another, but on the whole Arabs, Persians, Turks and Kurds accepted one another's existence.

The Ottoman Empire

The diversities which all these factors produced were recognized and perpetuated by the Ottoman system of government.

Very briefly and crudely the Ottoman system may be summarized as follows :

(i) The ruling power was vested in an absolute monarch, the Şultan or Padishah, ruling by hereditary right (his shadowy claim to the Caliphate was not emphasized until the nineteenth century). Even the most turbulent of his subjects paid formal allegiance to him, regarding him not as one ruler among many, but as *the* ruler of a whole 'world', the shadow of God on earth.

(ii) His power was exercised through two parallel organizations. On the one hand there was the military organization, which maintained order and defended the frontiers. It was composed in the first place of the professional soldiery, the Janissaries, secondly of the feudal levies. In Egypt, almost absolute civil and military power, subject to the formal suzerainty of the Sultan, was in the hands of the military oligarchy of the Mamlukes. On the other hand there was the religious organization for the defence, interpretation and application of the Religion : the Muftis who decided whether or not the acts and enactments of the Sultan and his officials were in accordance with the Shariah or Moslem religious law; the Qadis who dispensed Moslem law in the lawcourts; the religious schools where the doctrine and tradition of Islam were preserved.

(iii) There was practically no provincial administration. Each province had its appointed 'Wah', who commanded the garrison, collected taxes and performed any other functions of government ; but outside the larger towns his authority was only exercised indirectly through the feudatories and other local notables. Many districts possessed virtually complete local autonomy under traditional dynasties or self-made rulers.

(iv) The language of government was Turkish, of religion Arabic; there was therefore a natural tendency for members of other language groups to be assimilated to Turks or Arabs. But no pressure was put upon them to do so. Not only did they

preserve their own languages and traditions, but in many districts they were autonomous; for example, the Turcoman tribes and Kurdish confederations in Northern Syria and Iraq and in Eastern Anatolia were autonomous under their hereditary chiefs,

(v) The heterodox Islamic sects also possessed local autonomy in districts where they were strong enough to maintain it. This was particularly true of the Druzes in Lebanon and later in Jebel Druze; also to a large extent of the Alawis, who were, however, in certain parts subject to Sunni landowners. With autonomy they also possessed their own courts for deciding cases in accordance with their own customs and religious doctrines. In other regions the heterodox Moslems were persecuted and forced to conform to the Sunni religious law. Perhaps the Shi'is incurred harsher treatment than any other community, although in Iraq where they were very numerous they managed to preserve something of their tradition: their shrines and centres of learning.

The ' Millet System '

(vi) The Christians and Jews did not form part of the community of the State, and had no share either in its military or its religious organization, although converted Christians could and did rise to the highest positions, and even unconverted ones could make themselves useful to the Sultan in many ways. But they constituted recognized communities of their own, with a considerable degree of autonomy. The recognition of such communities may go back beyond the birth of Islam, but it was given religious sanction by the Islamic doctrine of the * People of the Book '. It was adopted and carried further by the Ottoman Turks. After the fall of Constantinople, Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror conferred upon the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of the city of civil as well as religious headship of the *millet* or ' nation ' of the Orthodox. Subsequently other autonomous Christian *millets*, each coterminous with the Empire, were recognized by the Government, until by the beginning of the present century they numbered fourteen. The Jews also constituted a *millet*.

The main features of the ' *millet* system ' have been well summarized as follows :

The heads, both central and local, of the *millets* were chosen by the *millet*, but the choice was subject to the Sultan's approval, communicated in the form of an Imperial *berat*, which alone enabled the

nominees to assume their offices and take possession of their temporalities. . . . [They had] their place—a high one—in the official hierarchy of the State, of which they were regarded as functionaries . . . they were ex-officio members, in the provinces, of the provincial administrative councils, while those at headquarters had the right of audience of the Sultan. The heads of the *millets* represented their flocks in their general and personal affairs *vis à vis* the Sublime Porte.

The autonomy of the *millets* was based . . . on ancient custom, which was reinforced in the nineteenth century by specific edicts. . . . Their government was conducted by the head of the *millet*, generally assisted by a council composed of clerical and lay members. The *millets* were autonomous in spiritual and in certain administrative and judicial matters. Their jurisdiction embraced, in the religious sphere, clerical discipline ; in the administrative sphere, the control of their properties, including cemeteries, education and churches; in the judicial sphere, marriage, dowries, divorce and alimony, civil rights and, in some *millets*, testamentary dispositions. Sentences pronounced by the courts of the *millets*, if within their competence, were executed on their behalf by the State.¹

The Social Position of Christians and Jews

(vii) The *millet* system made it possible for the Christians and Jews to maintain something of their communal life and social position. They played a great part in commerce, finance, and certain crafts, which the Moslems at first despised and at which they never became so adept as their subjects. This gave the Christians and Jews a considerable place in the economic and social life of the towns. In some regions they also had a part in the administration : for example, Egyptian finance was by tradition in the hands of the Copts. In Northern Iraq, Northern Lebanon, and parts of Syria, Palestine and Egypt, Christian peasants cultivated the land, and Christian landowners were not unknown. In spite of that tendency to Islamization which has already been mentioned, the ' People of the Book' still preserved much of their social structure ; and although there was very little spiritual life among them until the coming of the Catholic missions, at least they kept their beliefs and rites undamaged.

Yet their position was always precarious. In a State where everything depended on the caprice of the ruler and nobody's

¹ H. Luke, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London, Macmillan, 1936), pp. 97-8.

life or property was safe, the Christians and Jews were even more helpless than others. Usually they did not even have the tenuous protection of the religious law and of feudal custom. It was no doubt for this reason that throughout the Ottoman period, as in that which had preceded it, there was a continuous process of individual conversion to Islam ; while those who clung to their faith tended (except in certain regions) to move into the comparative safety of the towns.

The Closed Community

(viii) This description will have made it clear that the Ottoman Empire was not a military state ; it was composed of a large number of groups, local, tribal, linguistic and religious. On the whole, these groups formed closed communities. Each was a ' world ', sufficient to its members and exacting their ultimate loyalty. The worlds touched but did not mingle with each other ; each looked at the rest with suspicion and even hatred. Almost all were stagnant, unchanging and limited ; but the Sunni world, although torn by every sort of internal dissension, had something universal, a self-confidence and sense of responsibility which the others lacked. They were all marginal, shut out from power and historic decision.

Chapter Three

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Political Intervention of the West

IN the nineteenth century the position of the minorities was deeply affected by the impact of Europe upon the Ottoman world. First of all, this impact took a political form. The great European Powers found themselves faced with problems created by the decline of the Ottoman Empire ; they began to intervene more directly than before in its internal affairs, in order to secure influence over its Government with the object either of hastening or of preventing its collapse. One of the main pretexts of their intervention and of their quarrels with one another was the relation between the Porte and its Christian subjects. In the European provinces of the Empire, where nationalist movements developed in the course of the century, the result of European interference was the establishment of a number of Christian states, all more or less hostile to the Empire : Greece, Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria, Rumania. In the Asiatic provinces, diplomatic pressure on the Porte secured a certain amelioration in the status of the indigenous Christians and Jews. The Sultan was persuaded to issue a number of formal edicts, of which the most important were the Gulhane Decrees of 1839, the Hatti Himayun of 1856, and the Constitution of 1876. These decrees established the formal equality of civic rights and duties of all Ottoman subjects, guaranteed the essential liberties of the individual, replaced an absolutist by a constitutional form of government, and defined and guaranteed the position of the *millets*. Although these undertakings were never fully carried out, they were not wholly without effect. In addition to such general edicts, a large number of individual Christians and Jews in the towns were able to improve their position by securing European nationality or protected status and so enjoying the privileges of the ' Capitulations '.

Moreover, in this century a number of European Powers pressed their claim to possess a special position in regard to the **Sultan's** Christian subjects. From the sixteenth century onwards, **the** French Government had possessed, thanks to **its usually friendly**

relations with the Sultan, the right to protect European Christians who lived or travelled in the Ottoman domains. This right was formalized in a series of agreements, and its extension was gradually enlarged so as to include in practice not only European Catholic residents but certain of the indigenous Eastern Uniates, more particularly the Maronites of Lebanon. From the late eighteenth century onwards, the Russian Government began to claim a similar right to protect the Orthodox subjects of the Sultan. The Austrian Government and, at the end of the century, the Italians maintained an interest in the Roman Catholics and Uniates. The British Government had no such special position in regard to a particular Christian sect, but it concerned itself with the welfare of the Christians generally, and also at times cultivated friendly relations with the Druzes of Lebanon and the Jews. These special relationships found expression in the opening of schools in which the language of the protecting Power was taught, in diplomatic activities in order to improve the position of the protected community, and at times (as in 1840 and 1860 in Lebanon) in direct political or military intervention.

The activities of the European Powers improved the situation of the religious minorities, but also drew upon them the hatred of the Government and the majority. They were regarded as potential traitors, sources of weakness and instruments of European policy : in general as dangers to the Empire and to the Islamic community.

The Impact of the West on Society

More fundamental still were the changes brought about by the slow revelation of the society and culture of the West. In general there was an eager adoption of Western habits by the Christians and Jews, who were much quicker to abandon their traditional way of life than the Moslems. This was particularly true of the Christians and Jews of the great cosmopolitan trading towns and the Christians of Lebanon, many of whom emigrated to America; it was less true of the Copts in Egypt, who did not emigrate and were conservative in social matters. Westernization in Egypt was represented rather by the Syrian Christians, Armenians and Jews.

One effect of the social revolution was to open the closed community. Emigration and the life of the big cities led men to question the absolute validity of their communal loyalties;

improved communications made it possible for people to know more about each other than previously; members of different sects, religions and nations worked and played together in the new schools which the missionaries were opening and found that the others were human.

The increase of trade with Europe and America led to the rise of a new class of minority-population : the Levantine bourgeoisie of the big towns, Syrian Christian, Armenian, Greek and Jewish, very different in mentality from the Christians of the villages and the old towns, and much more distant than they from the majority. Often very rich and very powerful in the economic and financial spheres, they were slavishly imitative of Europe, at least on the surface, and more often than not despised the Oriental life around them. Often they had no loyalties at all, certainly no political loyalty to the State in which they were living. They tended to attach themselves to one or other of the foreign Governments with interests in the Near East, to imitate the French or English way of life and serve foreign Governments with a feverish and brittle devotion.

The Spread of Western Culture

The Westernization of social life was accompanied by the gradual assimilation of Western culture, through travel, commerce, emigration and schools. The immediate effect of this was also to increase the gap between Moslems on the one hand and Christians and Jews on the other. The latter became westernized in mind more quickly than the Moslems. In the West they discovered a world to which they could (or imagined that they could) be more than marginal. For the most part they came to knowledge of the West through French schools and the French language ; many of them adopted the French language as their own, and conceived a hopeless love of French civilization.

For the most part the attitude of Christians and Jews towards Europe was one of uncritical acceptance ; they wished to immerse themselves in the West and forget, if that were possible, their long night of subjection to Islam. There was another tendency, however, among the Christians : an awakening of their Eastern Christian self-consciousness, a conviction that although they must refuse to become Islamicized and must re-create their spiritual life with the aid of Europe, they had nevertheless a special part to play in the Moslem Orient. Gradually there was

a revival of the life of the Christian Churches, centred in Cairo and Beirut: first among the Uniates, mainly under the inspiration of French missionaries, and secondly in the Greek Orthodox and Armenian Orthodox Churches. It found expression in many ways, among them the growth of an exotic Catholic literature in the French language.

An incidental result of the aptitude of Christians and Jews for Western languages and ways of thought was their usefulness to Western Governments and companies, which therefore tended to draw a disproportionately large number of their minor employees from the minorities. This considerably affected their social structure and also aroused the envy and hatred of an increasingly important section of the majority.

As has been said, the immediate effect of this process was to widen the gap between minorities and majority. It was not long, however, before the Moslems also came under the influence of Western civilization. In general, they were never so uncritically in love with it as the Christians, and many of them felt fear and even repulsion for it. Their different attitudes towards it may be classified as follows :

(i) There were some who hated Western civilization because it was Christian and because it was threatening to break up their old world, and who wanted to keep it out by all means possible.

(ii) Others recognized the elements of value in the Western tradition and the necessity of accepting them, but wished at the same time to retain the lasting elements in Islam and the Arab tradition. For them the problem was one of 'modernizing' Islam; this tended to raise the further question of the relation between Islam and Christianity.

(iii) Others again wished to accept that part of the Western tradition which was essentially lay, liberal and scientific, with religious toleration and even indifference as an incidental consequence. They wished to abandon Islam in all except a formal sense and to build a secular Western civilization in the Arab world.

The Reform of the Ottoman Government

The Ottoman Government did not remain wholly passive and neutral in face of the Western influences entering its domains. From Mahmud II onwards, the Sultans and their Ministers

made a determined effort to modernize and strengthen their Empire. Two aspects of this effort are of interest here :

(i) The attempt of Abdul-Hamid II to create a new basis of loyalty to the Imam by reviving the Ottoman claim to the Caliphate. Largely this was undertaken as propaganda for external use, to frighten Europe with the threat of a union of Islamic nations under a single head. Partly also, however, it was an attempt to create for the dynasty a place in the hearts of its subjects, in an age in which the dynastic principle was growing weaker. But it was only its orthodox Moslem subjects who could share in this new loyalty ; in an Empire based upon Pan-Islamism and the Caliphate there would be no place for Christians, Jews or even heterodox Moslems who rejected the doctrine of the Caliphate.

(ii) The Sultans tried to ' conquer their Empire ' : to turn it from a group of loosely connected local, racial and religious units into a military and highly centralized state. The means to this end were various : the abolition of feudalism, the creation of an elaborate bureaucracy and provincial administration, the improvement of communications. Among the tasks which were undertaken, an attempt was made to break down the immemorial local autonomies. The feudal and tribal system of the Kurds was gradually broken down from the early decades of the century onwards. On several occasions Kurdish revolts in defence of their autonomy had to be crushed ; the last important uprising was that of Badr Khan Bey in the eighteen-forties. The Turcoman and Alawi principalities were subdued in the same way in the middle of the century. Towards the century's close, several attempts were made to establish the Imperial authority over Jebel Druze, but with little effective success in spite of the formal submission of the Druzes.

Lebanese Autonomy

In one instance, however, the new policy of destroying the autonomies was a complete failure. In the nineteenth century the autonomy of Lebanon, far from being destroyed, was strengthened and formalized.

The sectarian character of Lebanon, its desire for autonomy, and its organization under feudal lords and spiritual hierarchies were already well established when the Ottoman Sultans conquered Syria. Although the Mountain recognized the suzerainty

of the Sultan, it preserved its autonomy under hereditary Amirs who paid tribute to the Porte. And although it was frequently afflicted with civil wars, local tyrants and anarchy, it was rarely if ever torn by sectarian strife, until the period of the Shihab Amirs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was then that the rivalry appeared between Maronites and Druzes, which grew throughout the reign of the great Amir Bashir (1788-1841), and culminated in the disturbances of 1845 and 1860.

This rivalry was no doubt fed and embittered by religious differences, but its causes were mainly political and social. In part they were external to the life of the Mountain : the general unrest caused by Ibrahim Pasha's invasion of Syria; the international rivalry between France, which supported the Maronites, and Great Britain, which supported the Druzes ; and the desire of the Ottoman authorities to weaken the autonomy of the Mountain by destroying the tradition of religious tolerance on which it rested. But there were also causes in the Mountain itself. There was growing unrest among the Maronite peasants against their feudal landlords, both Maronite and Druze ; this showed itself in North Lebanon in the agrarian revolution of 1857 and the establishment of a short-lived agrarian republic. More important still, there was a gradual shift in the balance of the population : the Maronites were spreading southwards into regions which had formerly been chiefly Druze ; the Druzes were emigrating to the Hauran, and those who were left feared for their predominance.

In 1860, as the climax of a long period of unrest and growing hatred, the Druzes of the Mountain and the Moslems of Damascus killed some thousands of the local Christians. The Powers intervened, and the result of their intervention was the formalization of Lebanese autonomy in the Statute of 1861. This Statute (which was amended and definitively promulgated in 1864) made Lebanon into a self-governing Sanjaq, the territory of which included the Mountain but excluded the larger coastal towns. It was ruled by a Christian governor, appointed by the Sublime Porte and assisted by an administrative council representative of the sects. The Sanjaq had its own fiscal system, its own judiciary and its own gendarmerie. The Ottoman authorities had practically no control over its administration.

The system established in 1861 remained in force with no essential change until the outbreak of the Great War, when the

Turks abolished the self-government of the Sanjaq and subjected it to a regime of repression and starvation. But during the half-century of autonomy, Lebanon enjoyed freedom from civil strife and from Turkish oppression.

The Egyptian Government

In Egypt the line of political development was different. Under Muhammad Ali and his successors the country became even more free of control from Stamboul than it had been before. Their rule was comparatively favourable for the minorities. There was a gradual shift from the concept of theocracy to that of a nationalism which could include Copts as well as Moslems : and the Copts continued, as before, to hold many positions in the Government. The rulers welcomed foreigners who wished to live and work in the country ; Armenians, Syrians and others found an official career open to their talents, and vast opportunities in the commercial and financial life of the country. The dynasty was receptive to Western culture, and under its aegis a veneration of Western ideas and refinement spread over the upper classes at least, but the enlightenment was much less profound than it seemed, and beneath the surface Islamic feeling and hatred of the Christian West continued to be strong.

When the British occupied Egypt, they carried further certain tendencies begun by the dynasty of Muhammad Ali. They ensured greater freedom of religious thought and expression, greater equality before the law (although still far from complete equality). They opened the country still wider to foreigners, and they made full use of Eastern Christians as government officials : for example Syrian Christians in both the Egyptian and Sudanese Governments, and a small but important group of Armenians, of whom the most famous was Nubar Pasha. But contrary to what might have been expected, they neither attempted to use the Copts as instruments of government nor gave them in any way a privileged position. Individual Copts co-operated with the British, like Butrus Pasha Ghali, but in general there were fewer Coptic officials under the British than there had been in previous periods.

*The Rise of Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire**

In the second half of the nineteenth century there appeared a new factor, destined to have great effects, for better or for worse,

upon the position of minorities : the growth of nationalism in the Asiatic parts of the Ottoman Empire. From the very beginning this nationalism was closely linked with linguistic groups, but since like similar movements of the time it was a liberal nationalism, in the beginning the differences of the various linguistic groups were forgotten in a common opposition to the tyranny of the Sultan, with the aim of establishing the Ottoman community on a new basis, that of constitutional government, individual liberty and the equality of all nations and sects in the Empire. This movement began effectively with Midhat Pasha and the constitutionalists in the eighteen-seventies, was later organized as the Committee of Union and Progress and secured a temporary success with the Revolution of 1908. Members of minorities played an important part in effecting the success, and had it proved more than temporary the problem of minorities might have been solved. But the principles of 1908 soon gave way to a violent Turkish nationalism, an attempt on the part of the Turkish military men who had seized power to make the non-Turkish citizens of the Empire into Turks, or else to repress and, where possible, exterminate them.

This new development put an end to the ' Ottoman national' movement and encouraged the separate nationalisms of the subject-peoples.

(i) The most important of these movements was Arab nationalism. There is no doubt that the popular force behind the movement in its first phase was Islamic as much as it was Arab ; that many of its leaders did not clearly distinguish Islamism from Arabism; and that a very large part of the Arabic-speaking Christians regarded the movement with fear as no more than a scarcely-disguised religious movement. Nevertheless the educated young men who were the real leaders of the movement were in general concerned to preach the separation of politics and religion, and to emphasize the equality of all creeds inside the Arab community; and on that basis they found many collaborators among the Arab Christians, particularly the Greek Orthodox. This lay tendency was due partly to the growing indifference in religious matters : partly to the belief that internal divisions had weakened the Arab nation and could be used by its enemies to keep it in subjection ; also, more positively to the increasing consciousness of and pride in the Arab heritage of culture ; and again to the influence of the ideas of Western

liberal democracy, coming in through Paris, Stamboul, Cairo and Beirut.

(ii) There was a distinctive nationalist movement among some of the Arabic-speaking Christians of Lebanon, particularly among those of them who had a French clerical education. They wanted the Sanjaq of Lebanon to become an independent State, under European protection and with extended frontiers. Although naturally suspicious of all Moslem movements, they were not necessarily hostile to the movements for Arab or Syrian independence, so long as their own demands were conceded.

(iii) Towards the end of the century, the Armenian middle-class of Stamboul and the other Ottoman towns began to create a national organization with the object of securing autonomy or complete independence for the Armenian provinces of the Empire. Although weakened by internal divisions, the movement was given additional power by the encouragement of certain Western Powers, the support of the Armenian communities in the outer world and the existence of the strong communal organization of the Armenian Church and *Millet*. The Ottoman Government soon came to regard it, or rather the use of it by European Governments, as a danger to the existence of the Empire ; hence the large-scale massacres of the years 1895-1915.

(iv) Rather later, a Kurdish national committee was formed in Stamboul, with a similar programme of autonomy or independence for the Kurdish provinces. It was composed mainly of the intelligentsia and bourgeoisie, although it had relations with certain of the great tribal chiefs ; but the bulk of the Kurdish tribesmen did not yet think in national terms, and so the progress of the movement was slow. It tended to be in conflict with the Armenian movement, because the Armenian and Kurdish claims overlapped with one another, the two populations being so intermingled ; but at times the two movements worked together.

Egyptian Nationalism

Just as the political development of Egypt differed from that of the other Arabic-speaking countries in the nineteenth century, so did its nationalist movement. Arab nationalism did not take deep root in Egypt; the popular movement was that for a separate Egyptian nation and state, which first became important under Arabi Pasha in the eighteen-eighties, appeared again at the

beginning of the twentieth century under Mustafa Kamil Pasha, and finally expressed itself in the Wafdist movement of Zaghlul Pasha.

Like Arab nationalism, Egyptian nationalism had two faces. On the surface it was a lay movement which linked together Copts and Moslems, and it was much influenced by the ideas of French liberalism. This was much more than a catchword, it corresponded to the realities of the situation : no one can deny that the Copts, who pride themselves on being descendants of the ancient inhabitants of the Nile valley, are fully a part of the Egyptian community. Moreover, the refusal of the British to give them the place they thought themselves entitled to, drove them into opposition to Great Britain. There was, however, a difference between the articulate leadership and the inarticulate spirit of the movement: the latter was much more Islamic than the former.

Chapter Four

CHANGES SINCE THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Changes in Forms of Government

IN the last twenty-five years the tendencies analysed in the last chapter have continued for the most part, but with certain changes of emphasis and the introduction of certain new factors.

The Western influences upon government have continued to grow and have been given greater scope by the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The division of its former territories into a number of small states introduced certain new complications into the problem of minorities : for example, the Kurds, who had formed a solid block with a local majority in the Eastern portion of the Ottoman Empire, and for whom the establishment of a fully autonomous national home had once been contemplated, were divided between Turkey, Syria and Iraq, and raised grave problems in each of the three countries.

All the countries with which this study deals have been under direct or indirect Western control for all or part of the twenty-five years. Great Britain exercised a virtual protectorate over Egypt until the Treaty of 1936 ; she held the Mandate for Iraq until the Treaty of 1931 and for Transjordan until 1946 ; she still has the Mandate for Palestine. France was given the Mandate over Syria and Lebanon, and held it until its gradual extinction in the years after 1941, and its formal termination in 1945. The influence of Great Britain and France has meant, on the whole, a considerable immediate improvement in the situation of the minorities ; they have been given a more unfettered enjoyment of their civil and political rights than under the Ottoman Turks. Certain new ideas have been introduced which have had a considerable effect on men's minds and spirits : the most important of them being the idea of minority-guarantees, embodied in the minority-treaties which formed an integral part of the peace-settlement after the first world war, in the texts of the Mandates, and in the declaration made by the Iraqi Government on its admission to the League of Nations. Another less innocuous idea is that of autonomy for minorities : rejected by

Great Britain in regard to the Kurds of Iraq, who were granted only certain educational and administrative privileges, but adopted by the French, first in their creation of an independent Lebanon and secondly in their establishment of autonomous Druze and Alawi districts.

Western control has quickened a process which had already begun both in the Ottoman Empire and in Egypt: the Westernization of forms of government. The limits of government action have been extended, the bureaucracy enlarged, a greater degree of administrative uniformity introduced. New political ideas have spread the ideas of political rights, of the individual, not the sect, as the unit of society, and of a personal status regulated by positive law and not by religious precept. All these changes have had a direct or indirect effect upon the position of minorities.

The Growth of Arab and Egyptian Nationalism

The Arab and Egyptian nationalist movements have continued to grow in intensity throughout these years. These two movements have developed separately, but in both of them it has been possible to see a certain change of emphasis, from the liberal nationalism of the nineteenth century to the authoritarian nationalism of a later day. The change is not complete, and may not continue, but in so far as it has existed it has tended to encourage a love of uniformity for its own sake, and a suspicion of diversity, which have strained its relations with the minorities. In the Arab movement this change has been linked with another: what was at first a movement directed primarily against the Turks has become a movement directed primarily against the Western Powers who have been in control of the Arab countries. This change also should not be exaggerated; there is a wing of the Arab movement which hates the West and all its works, but there is another which, while opposed to the present policy of the Western Powers, is eager for co-operation with the West and the full participation of the Arab people in the community of nations. Both these wings are agreed, however, in regarding with suspicion those minorities which have sided with the Western Powers and profited from their presence, and also those which without their consent have been used as pretexts for intervention. In Iraq this suspicion has been directed mainly against the Assyrians, and led to the incidents of 1933; in Syria and Lebanon it has been directed

against the Maronites and Armenians and to a lesser degree against the other Christians; in Egypt against the Syrian Christians; in all the Arab countries there has been a rising wave of hostility to the Jews because of Zionist policy in Palestine, and it is a hostility which has affected even the Oriental Jews who are not Zionists.

In spite of undercurrents of hostility, however, formal relations between majority and minorities have usually been good inside the nationalist ranks. Every nationalist party as a matter of form professes to believe in liberty of conscience and worship and in the administrative and cultural rights of linguistic minorities; there is a strong section of the nationalist movement which believes in the separation of religion from politics and the equality of all within the national community, and which also understands that the linguistic minorities can only be brought into the national community by persuasion and good treatment. Moreover, some of the most prominent of the nationalist leaders have been members of minorities: in Egypt the Copt Makram Ebeid, in Syria the Protestant Faris al-Khuri, in Lebanon the Druzes Shakib and Adil Arslan, in Palestine the Greek Orthodox George Antonius. Nationalist conferences, delegations and ministries have usually contained representatives of the minorities.

The Influence of Turkey and Russia

Throughout these years the Arab nationalist movement has been deeply influenced by the development of the Turkish movement across the northern frontier. There are two aspects of the Kemalist revolution in particular which have not gone unnoticed. The first is the rigid separation of religion from politics, the attempt to establish the Turkish State upon the basis of race and language. Many Arab nationalists regard this as the secret of Turkish success, and desire to remake the Arab community on a similar basis; if this were done it would of course have a good effect upon the position of the Arab Christians.

Secondly, the persecution of linguistic minorities by the Turkish Government has had its effects upon the Arabs. The attempt to exterminate or expel the Christians and forcibly to assimilate the Kurds and Arabs has resulted in a flood of refugees over the frontier of Syria: Kurds, Armenians and Arabs have sought refuge in the Jezirah and other parts of the country.

What is of more importance, some of the more extreme nationalists are attracted by the ruthlessness of the Turkish method, and hope the day will come when they can practise it themselves. This is particularly true of some Iraqi nationalists in their relations to the Kurdish question, and of some Egyptians in regard to the Levantine middle-class of the big towns, so similar to the middle-class of Stamboul and Smyrna of which the Turks are trying to rid themselves.

Another influence which has grown with time has been that of the U.S.S.R., which has solved the national problem by the grant of complete cultural and considerable political autonomy and the retention of economic control. This solution has had a considerable effect upon the ideas of the minorities, particularly of those which have a close connexion with Russia : the Kurds and Armenians, who have fellow-nationals in the U.S.S.R. and latterly the Greek Orthodox, whose traditional connexion with Russia was broken temporarily in 1917, but has since begun to reappear.

Fears and Aspirations of Minorities

To a certain extent the minorities have transferred to the new nationalist movements and the governments which emanated from them the emotions they felt for the Ottoman Government. They have not regarded themselves as possessing any but a forced allegiance to such governments, whose actions they watch with fear and suspicion ; they look on the nationalist movement as at best alien, at worst hostile to them. They have retained the same ways of reacting to this situation : first, despair and passive acquiescence in their position (as with many of the Armenians); secondly, the search for foreign support and, where circumstances make it possible, the demand for autonomy under foreign protection (for example, Maronites, Assyrians, a section of the Alawis); thirdly, refusal to accept Arab domination and intransigent adherence to their own traditions and demands (e.g. a section of the Kurds); fourthly, acceptance of the necessity of assimilation and adherence to the national movement (many of the Copts and Greek Orthodox).

Minority Nationalism

The existence of separate Lebanese, Armenian and Kurdish national movements has already been mentioned. These move-

ments have continued to grow throughout the last twenty-five years.

The Lebanese movement has been stimulated by the creation of an independent Lebanese Republic by the French, and the encouragement both by the French and by the dominant element inside the Republic of a feeling of difference from and even hostility to the Arab inhabitants of the hinterland. In the free atmosphere of Beirut there has grown up a distinctive Lebanese literary movement and an articulate doctrine of Lebanese nationalism; but at the same time the Arab idea also has been spreading in Lebanon, and with it the sense that economically and spiritually Lebanon cannot exist if cut off from the interior.

The Armenian movement has been radically changed by the events of the first world war and the subsequent period: the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the great massacres during and after the war which practically exterminated the Armenian population of Asia Minor, the establishment of the short-lived Armenian Republic and then its absorption into the U.S.S.R., the growth of the Armenian communities in Syria and Lebanon through the flight of refugees from Cilicia and then from Alexandretta. The Armenian question, so far as it concerns the Arab countries, has been mainly a question of the attitude of the Armenians in Syria and Lebanon on the one hand to the Armenian S.S.R. and on the other to the countries in which they are living.

Speaking generally, it may be said that the great majority of Armenians desire ultimately to return to the Caucasus and rebuild their national life there: practically all of them indeed except the small minority who have property or large interests in Syria and Lebanon. They are divided, however, on the manner of their return: some accept the inclusion of Armenia in the U.S.S.R., are more or less ardent supporters of the Communist regime and would therefore be willing to return immediately; others are opposed to Communism and only desire to return when Armenia shall become an independent state. Cutting across this there is another division: one section wishes the Armenians in exile to preserve all their national traditions, and to live as temporary visitors under Western protection, while another wishes to make an alliance with the Arab nationalists, and as a condition of this advocates a certain degree of assimilation although not to the extent of abandoning national characteristics.

The Kurdish movement also has been deeply influenced by the events of the first world war and the subsequent years. For a time during and after the war the Kurds had hopes of obtaining autonomy, which was indeed promised them by the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920. The promise, however, was not fulfilled, and the main body of the Kurdish population has remained divided between Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran. The nationalist movement has aimed at reuniting these groups in an independent state if that should be possible ; if it is not possible, at securing for them administrative and cultural autonomy inside their countries of residence, or at least the right to live as Kurds, using their own language and preserving their customs and social organization. Kurdish nationalism has been growing in strength throughout the last decades, but it is limited in its effect by the persistence of tribalism, which is still a stronger force than nationalism among the Kurds.

In Turkey no concession at all has been made to the Kurdish demands, and a ruthless attempt has been made to crush their spirit and compel them to become Turks. In Iran also the Government of Riza Shah opposed the autonomist movement, but since 1941 the great Kurdish tribes have possessed virtual autonomy with a certain degree of Russian encouragement. In Iraq they were given formal guarantees but little has been done to carry them out; although not actively persecuted they have been neglected. Only in Syria, particularly the Jazirah, have they been well treated by the Mandatory Power and even encouraged to hope for autonomy. In consequence, Syria has become a centre of the nationalist movement and a refuge for exiled leaders from Turkey.

This period also has seen the attempt to create national movements in which minorities can participate as well as the majority. Thus in Iraq, King Feisal and Great Britain while Mandatory Power tried to create a sense of Iraqi national solidarity in which Arabs and Kurds, Sunnis, Shi'is and Christians could share equally. Similarly in Syria and Lebanon there grew up a ' Syrian National Party ' whose doctrines were the unity of Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Transjordan, the distinctiveness of Greater Syria from the other Arabic-speaking countries and the equal membership of all its inhabitants (except the Zionists) in the national community.

Social Changes

Beneath these changes of feeling and political status, vast social changes have been gradually proceeding which may ultimately alter the whole nature of the problem. The existence of the closed communities of the past was inseparably linked with the feudal or village economy. Now better communications are linking regions and villages with one another and changing the whole organization of rural life. What is even more important, an urban industrial and commercial life is developing, with the necessary individualism of urban life. These factors are weakening the strength of communal loyalties. At the same time they may produce new sources of discord: the xenophobia of the new indigenous Moslem bourgeoisie may easily transfer itself to middle-class Jews and Christians, who on the whole take more easily to commercial and professional life than the Moslems.

Chapter Five

EGYPT

Distribution of Minorities

THE following Tables show the distribution of the Minorities throughout the Provinces of Egypt and the total numbers of the different communities :

TABLE I

Population of Egypt by Religions

Moslems	15,586,757
Christians	1,377,867
Jews	64,565
Others	936
Total	17,030,125

TABLE II

Distribution of Minorities by Provinces

Province	Christians	Jews	Others	Total Population
Governorate of Cairo	218,329	36,155	321	1,396,538
" " Alexandria	133,075	25,183	186	729,935
" " Canal Zone	27,772	891	261	192,328
" " Damietta	595	5	—	44,166
" " Suez	6,886	81	39	55,149
Sinai Province	1,365	28	14	18,965
Southern Desert Province	128	—	—	31,476
Western " "	639	2	—	57,121
Red Sea Coast District	97	3	41	9,641
Province of Beheira	18,277	67	18	1,128,591
" " Daqahliya	26,730	431	2	1,310,751
" " Gharbiya	37,131	700	29	2,108,380
" " Minufiya	32,888	25	—	1,223,476
" " Qalyubiya	13,419	116	4	649,179
" " Sharqiya	22,761	134	2	1,184,847
" " Aswan	10,728	108	1	318,570
" " Assiut	279,962	78	5	1,291,780
" " Beni Suef	32,889	12	1	601,332
" " Faiyum	28,815	29	—	633,026
" " Girga	194,387	37	1	1,218,142
" " Giza	20,378	356	4	749,168
" " Minia	176,987	68	—	988,003
" " Qina	92,750	56	7	1,088,582
Total	1,376,988	64,565	936	17,029,146

Thus the minorities between them account for about 8 per cent of the total population. The greater part of them are Christians, and most of the Christians are Copts. Since a majority of the Christians other than Copts and Jews possess foreign citizenship or protection, the problem of indigenous minorities is almost entirely the problem of the Copts.

The Copts are found in large numbers throughout most of the provinces, but are particularly important in Cairo and the Upper Egyptian provinces of Minia, Assiut, Girga and Qina, while the other minorities are only important in Cairo, Alexandria and the Canal Zone.

Written Guarantees

The Constitution of 1923 contains certain guarantees for the non-Moslem elements in the population ; guarantees the explicit grant of which is made necessary by the declaration, in Article 138 of the Constitution, that the official religion of the State is Islam. Thus Article 3 states that all Egyptians are equal before the law ; they have an equal enjoyment of civil and political rights, and are equally subject to public charges and duties, without distinction of race, language or religion. Article 12 guarantees absolute freedom of conscience ; and Article 13 the free exercise of all religions or beliefs, in conformity with established usages and on condition that they are not harmful to public order and good morals.

Personal Status

The Constitution grants three rights to the minorities : freedom of conscience, freedom of worship and equality before the law. They also possess a fourth right: that of having matters of personal status—marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc.—determined by their own spiritual authorities in accordance with their own religious precepts. The *millet* system had long existed under the Ottoman authorities, and after the extinction of Ottoman suzerainty in 1914 the Egyptian Government gave it legal recognition by Law No. 8 of 1915. Each community has its communal council (*Majlis Milli*) competent to deal with questions of personal status, and its own communal laws, customary or codified, which the Council applies.

In 1925, certain cases were transferred from the Communal Councils to the *Majalis Hasbiyah* which already dealt with such

cases for Moslems. Seven years later, Ali Mahir Pasha, then Minister of Justice, proposed to transfer all other cases from the Councils to the unified system of 'Tribunals of Personal Status', parallel to and interlocking with the system of national (or so-called 'native') courts. This proposal was strongly opposed by the minorities, and was replaced by another proposal, to retain the existing religious Councils in certain matters—marriage, divorce and filiation—while all others should come within the competence of the Native Tribunals. It was also proposed to effect certain reforms in the procedure of the religious Councils; and to drop the idea, which had previously been entertained, of establishing civil marriage.

These proposals also met with opposition; and nothing was done until Ali Mahir Pasha became Prime Minister in 1936. In May of that year his Government issued a decree-law for the regulation of non-Moslem communal jurisdictions. It provided for the retention of existing communal jurisdictions in regard to marriage, divorce and certain other matters, subject to the provisions that their functioning should be sanctioned and in various ways controlled by the Government, and that the rules which they applied should be codified and published within six months. All other matters of personal status would be decided by the Native Tribunals, which would also act as courts of appeal, intervene in cases of denial of justice, and decide questions of competence.

Once more the opposition of minorities led to the plan being dropped. Three years later, in 1939, the then Minister of Justice drafted a bill on similar lines. When it came before the Senate it was referred back to the relevant Committee for reconsideration; and it was withdrawn by the Government in May 1940. In 1944 a further attempt was made to tackle the problem.

The Attitude of the Government

The Egyptian Government has not undertaken any formal international commitments in regard to minorities; the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty contains no guarantees for them. In practice, however, the influence of Great Britain has been strong enough since the conclusion of the Treaty to prevent any open discrimination against minorities. The appearance of toleration is maintained. Every Cabinet contains at least one Coptic Minister; there are Coptic, Syrian and Jewish Senators and Deputies.

In less obtrusive ways, however, discrimination is practised. It is becoming more difficult for a Christian or a Jew to obtain a position in the Government. Various measures taken against foreign institutions also by implication weigh heavily on the minorities. Thus, the bill drawn up by Ali Mahir Pasha's Government in 1940 restricting the activities of foreign missions would, had it become law, have damaged the spiritual life of the Christian communities ; the various laws controlling the activities of foreign companies also tried to restrict the economic opportunity of the Jewish and Levantine communities from which the foreign companies have hitherto drawn most of their employees.

Nationalism and the Minorities

From the point of view of Egyptian nationalism, the minorities are divided into two sharply distinguished categories. First, there are the Copts, who constitute the National Church *par excellence* and to whom the name of Egyptians cannot be denied ; secondly, all the other communities—Syrians, Armenians, Jews, etc?—who are generally regarded as foreigners even where they possess Egyptian nationality. Practically all sections of nationalist opinion are opposed to this second group : partly because they are regarded as supporting and helping Great Britain throughout the period of occupation and even later, and partly because they are identified, as employers and employees, with the foreign industrial and commercial class which has dominated the economic life of Egypt for the last three generations.

In regard to the Copts, however, nationalist opinion is more divided. There are two main trends. That represented by the Wafd tries to dissociate nationalism from religion and desires to build a lay state in which all Egyptians shall have equal rights and duties ; it regards the Coptic Church as the Egyptian Church and the Copts as full members of the nation. This toleration has two causes : first, the support which the Copts have given the Wafd since its foundation ; secondly, the influence of the French conception of secular egalitarian nationalism upon the educated bourgeoisie. There is another nationalism, however, which derives its inspiration not from Western Europe but from Islam as understood by Al-Azhar. It is Pan-Islamic even before it is Egyptian, and it recognizes none but Moslems as full members of the national community, which it regards as only part of the

universal Islamic community. It is not necessarily hostile to the Copts but it does not consider them to form part of the political community.

Until recently, the first of these two tendencies was dominant, but in the last few years two events have occurred which seem likely to overturn the balance. The first is the breach between the two leaders of the Wafd, Nahas Pasha the Moslem, and Makram Ebeid Pasha the Copt, leading to the withdrawal of the latter and with him the majority of the Copts from the Wafd. This has already weakened the Wafd, and will probably have the further consequence of making it less tolerant in religious matters than before. Secondly, the last years have seen the rapid spread of Pan-Islamic nationalism, particularly among the educated youth and the proletariat of the towns, and its organization in a number of groups of which the 'Ikhwan Al-Muslimin' is at present the most important. It seems possible that, as the strength of the Wafd decreases, its hold over the popular mind will be more and more challenged by these groups, and this will endanger the position of the Copts.

The Copts : History

The Copts claim to be the descendants of the ancient Egyptians, although throughout the ages their racial composition has been altered by inter-marriage with other races. The Egyptians became mainly Christian in the early centuries of the Church, but the majority of them broke away from the main body of the Church and embraced the Monophysite doctrine, for reasons not wholly religious : partly their adherence to Monophysitism was an expression of national hostility to Byzantine rule and partly a result of the struggle for predominance between the Patriarch of Alexandria and the other Patriarchs. They formed a 'national' church, which in course of time acquired its name of 'Coptic', in opposition to the 'Melkite' or Orthodox Church of Byzantium. They were persecuted by the Imperial authorities, but the Arab conquest in the seventh century gave them a short respite. They were tolerated as 'Ahl al-Dhimmah', and were recognized as an autonomous Church on a level of equality with the Orthodox. But after a time discrimination began once more, and continued with intervals until the coming of Muhammad Ali.

One consequence of Moslem rule was the gradual conversion of many Copts to Islam. This, together with immigration from

Arabia, reduced the Copts from a majority to an ever-shrinking minority. Even those who remained Copts were influenced by their Moslem surroundings and adopted many of the externals of Islam. Moreover, they gradually abandoned the Coptic language in favour of Arabic. Coptic died out as a literary language in the fourteenth century, and as a spoken one some centuries later; but is still used together with Arabic in the liturgy.

It was in these centuries that the Copts acquired many of the characteristics which still mark them: their subtlety of mind, their claiSnishness and readiness to help one another, their fear of Moslems, linked with a belief in their superiority to the Moslems. Together with a special character they acquired a special position in society. They were artisans, physicians, clerks; they had almost a monopoly of various financial activities, as money-lenders, tax-collectors and government officials. They fulfilled a necessary economic function, and this no doubt is among the reasons why periods of persecution were followed by others of comparative toleration.

Muhammad Ali and his successors relieved the Copts from persecution and gave them full opportunity to use their talents in the public service. With the British occupation, their freedom from persecution continued, but they were not given any special privileges or protection; indeed it became more difficult for them to rise in government service than previously. In general they shared in the prosperity and the social and intellectual progress of the nineteenth century, and in many ways their social position was changed.

The Copts : Social Position

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the Copts are an integral part of the Egyptian nation, and that their dominant social characteristics are those of Egyptian society as a whole. It is going too far to say, as Cromer did, that the only difference between Copt and Moslem is one of worship. But it is true that their points of similarity are more numerous than those of difference. This is due not simply to an identity of racial stock and of environment, but also to the tendency of minorities to adopt the ways of the majority, at least as a protective colouring; and to the spread of Western civilization which is threatening to destroy Coptic and Moslem traditions alike.

The bulk of the Copts, as of the Moslems, are peasants living in the villages of the Nile ^{at} ^{the} Delta. They produce the same crops" suffer the same oppressions and face the same economic problems. They have similar customs for birth, marriage and death; similar superstitions and folk-lore; similar relics of that Nile-worship which has been called the real religion of the Egyptian peasant.

There is also a Coptic land-owning and town-dwelling class. Much of the old monopoly of certain economic functions ^{is} gone, but something of it remains. Most of the goldsmiths, money-lenders and land agents are Copts, and there are numerous Coptic minor officials in certain ministries, although it is more difficult for them to be promoted or appointed to important posts than formerly. There is perhaps a certain economic discrimination against them, but not enough to prevent them prospering. The urban Copts, like the rest of the urban population, are in process of transition from the traditional way of life to one at least superficially westernized. It may be that being Christians they have been able to advance a little more rapidly than the Moslems on the way of Westernization ; but it is the same process which both are going through and which may ultimately remove many of the differences between them.

Like other Eastern Christians, the Copts are keenly aware of the benefits of education. In the last two or three generations a large number of Coptic schools have been established. They include 4 per cent of all schools in the country, and 16 per cent of all schools above the elementary level. Over 25 per cent of the pupils in all schools above the elementary level are Copts ; in girls' schools the percentage is even larger. Of this 25 per cent, rather less than half are students of Coptic schools, and a large proportion of the rest attend foreign institutions, especially missionary schools. At the elementary level most Coptic children attend government schools; but there is serious discontent with these schools, because they make no adequate provision for Christian teaching and because of discrimination against Coptic teachers.

The Copts are a more literate community than the Moslems, but in spite of this have made only a small contribution to the intellectual life of modern Egypt. There are to-day scarcely any outstanding Coptic writers or thinkers. Nor is there a very active spiritual life among them. It is true that since the nine-

teenth century there have been stirrings of spiritual revival, mainly among the laity, but they have been obstructed by the attitude of the Patriarchate, the upper clergy and the monasteries ; this is one of the causes of the numerous conflicts which have occurred between the Patriarch and the General Council of the Community.

No doubt this spiritual stagnation is partly responsible for the numerous defections from the Coptic Church which still take place. Conversions to Islam are frequent, and many of the educated youth, while remaining nominally Copts, are becoming agnostic or atheist; the best-known Arabic writer on agnosticism and free thought, Salama Musa, is a Copt. In addition, many of the more religious have joined the Coptic Catholic and Protestant Churches. The first was established during the eighteenth century, as a result of the work of Roman Catholic missionaries ; the second in the nineteenth century, also in consequence of the work of Western missionaries. Both have a more active life of the spirit and mind than the Church from which they broke off. Sometimes, but not always, the Coptic Catholics and Protestants are included in the general term ' Copt ' .

The Copts and the Nationalist Movement

The Copts are as fully Egyptian as their Moslem neighbours, and have the same national loyalties. This is partly a matter of sentiment, partly of necessity, since they realize that they can never be more than a minority which must try to live on the best possible terms with the majority at whose mercy it lies. During the period of British rule, they never tried to throw in their lot with the British as possible protectors against Moslem domination : perhaps because they realized that sooner or later the British would come to terms with the nationalists; perhaps also because Great Britain never encouraged them to rely upon her.

It is true that individual Copts co-operated with Great Britain, but the bulk of the community threw in its lot with the nationalist movement, and eventually with a particular nationalist party, the Wafd. For twenty years the Copts as a whole were ardently Wafdist, and the Copt Makram Ebeid Pasha was almost the dominant figure of the Party, although as a Copt it would have been difficult for him to take the first place in it.

During this period, the Copts profited whenever the Wafd was

in the ascendant. They had their share of government offices, and a less obvious but no less substantial advantage—they felt themselves a part of the national community, sharing in its joys and sorrows. It was true that parties in opposition to the Wafd sometimes tried to weaken its hold on the masses by stirring up their latent anti-Coptic feeling; but the Wafd in its great days was too strong to be shaken by such methods.

Since the quarrel of Nahas Pasha and Makram Ebeid Pasha, however, the Copts as a whole have withdrawn their support from the Wafd. They still remain nationalist by belief, but with greater doubt than before about their own future as members of the Egyptian nation.

The Syrians

In addition to the Copts, the Christians in Egypt include Maronite, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Syrian Orthodox and Syrian Catholic communities. The greater number of these are Syrians or Lebanese by origin. In addition, there are a large number of Moslems who are of Syrian or Lebanese origin. It is not possible to estimate accurately how large the whole Syro-Lebanese community is ; it is perhaps about 100,000.

There must always have been Syrians in Egypt and Egyptians in Syria ; but the existence of a large Syrian community in Egypt dates from the nineteenth century only. The efforts of the line of Muhammed Ali to westernize the country, followed by the British occupation, afforded opportunities in government service and commerce to Syrians who possessed, besides their quickness of mind, some knowledge of Western languages and methods. The Hamidian tyranny and the lack of opportunity in their own country also acted as incentives.

The economic position of the Syrians is on the whole a favoured one. The majority belong to the urban middle class, concentrated in Cairo, Alexandria and the Canal Zone. Commerce and the professions are their main callings. During the period of British occupation there were many Syrian officials in the Government, but most of them have now retired.

Socially the Moslems mix easily and are soon assimilated to the Egyptian Moslems, but the Christians tend to be more exclusive. If they go beyond their own community, it is into cosmopolitan European rather than Egyptian society. Many of them are almost completely Europeanized ; and these have served

as a link between the West and the Arabo-Islamic world in which they live. They include some of the greatest names in modern Arabic journalism and literature : Sarruf, Nimr, Zaidan and Mutran.

The Syrians of Egypt have played a certain part in the politics of their country of origin, but have held aloof from the party struggles of their country of adoption. Their relations with the Egyptians have not always been as good as they might have been. The Egyptians accuse them of having been willing tools of British Imperialism, as journalists and officials. They also dislike their social exclusiveness, and distrust them as a rootless middle-class of merchants and money-lenders. The Syrians, for their part, often despise the Egyptians as less civilized than themselves, but at the same time fear them as a majority possessed of political power.

The Armenians

The number of Armenians resident in Egypt is about 30,000. Some thousands of these are Catholics and Protestants, but the majority belong to the Armenian Gregorian community. About half of them were resident in the country before the war of 1914-18, while the remainder came in, mainly as refugees from Turkey, during and after the war. At least a third of them are Egyptian citizens.

The Armenians mostly dwell in the towns, and are largely merchants and artisans by calling. Their community is on the whole prosperous and maintains its own benevolent institutions. It preserves its language and its social and cultural traditions. Egypt is indeed one of the most important centres of Armenian culture.

The Armenians as a body do not interfere in the political life of Egypt, and there is no prejudice against them. In the nineteenth century a few individuals, like Nubar Pasha and Tigrane Pasha, held high positions in the government; under the present regime such opportunities are not likely to recur.

The Jews

The 65,000 Jews of Egypt live mainly in Cairo and Alexandria, and are divided into two communities: the orthodox (Rabbanite) Jews and the Karaites, who accept the Scriptures but reject the Talmud, and of whom there are about 5,000. The

orthodox Jews are again divided into two communities, those of Cairo and Alexandria, each with its Chief Rabbi and its communal organization.

The Jews are mainly Arabic-speaking. They are of long residence in the country, and have a unique position in its economic life. They are financiers, merchants, clerks, artisans and members of the liberal professions. Great families like the Hararis, Qattawis and Rolos have important interests in banks and other enterprises. Much of the non-Arabic press is also in their hands.

Socially, they lead their own separate existence. Culturally they are largely Gallicized. Individual Jews play a part in the public life of the country, as deputies and even as court-officials. But they do not interfere in politics as a community, partly because so many of them have foreign citizenship, and partly because their position is satisfactory and they have been well-treated for the last four generations.

Beneath the surface, however, there is a considerable dislike for them, based partly on religious prejudice, partly on their economic position. The growing hostility to Zionism among the educated classes is another cause of dislike. The feeling against them has increased in the last few years and has been fostered by such parties as ' Misr al-Fatat' and the ' Ikhwan al-Muslimin '.

Note on some Foreign Communities

There are large Greek, Italian and other European communities in Cairo, Alexandria and other towns. With the exception of the nationals of the great Powers, their fate is largely bound up with that of the Christians and Jews who have been considered in this chapter. Like the Syrians and Armenians, they are an urban community who have taken advantage of the welcome which the dynasty of Muhammed Ali gave to foreigners during the nineteenth century. They are business men, shopkeepers, office-workers: they live mostly in the larger towns, but the Greek shopkeeper is to be found everywhere in the country. Some of them have become very rich in Egypt, and almost all have found a livelihood there. They scarcely mix with the Egyptians, forming almost closed communities, preserving their own languages with French as *lingua franca* and having a superficial acquaintance with Arabic. Normally, they have no loyalty to Egypt, and often no political loyalties at all. For all these

reasons they incur the hostility of the Egyptians, a hostility which easily spreads from them to other Christians and Jews. If the Egyptian nationalist movement should become actively intolerant, it is they who are likely to suffer first and most, as in Turkey during the last few years. They are very conscious of this and usually regard the nationalists, and indeed Egyptians as such, with hatred and fear.

Chapter Six

PALESTINE

Distribution of Minorities

AN official estimate of the total population of Palestine in 1944 gives the following figures for the different religious communities :

Moslems	1,057,621
Jews	521,564
Christians	134,599
Miscellaneous	14,002
Total	1,727,786

The Moslems are mainly Sunnis and Arabic-speaking, but include two minorities, the Shi'is, who number 4,100, and the Caucasians, of whom there are 800. The communities classified as 'Miscellaneous' include Druzes (9,148), Baha'is (350) and Samaritans (182).

The minorities form about 9 per cent of the total population, 13 per cent of the total non-Jewish population ; 85 per cent of the minority-population is Christian. The great majority of the Christians are Arabic-speaking, the remainder speaking Armenian or some European language ; they are more or less equally divided between Roman Catholics and Uniates on the one hand, and non-Catholics (Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, Anglicans, etc.) on the other. The Caucasians have their own dialects, the Baha'is are Persian-speaking by origin, but both speak Arabic in addition.

The Table on p. 53 shows the geographical distribution of the minorities, by districts and sub-districts, at the end of 1942.

Written Guarantees

The fundamental rights of minorities are recognized by the Mandate for Palestine. Article 2 guarantees the civil and religious rights of all inhabitants of the country, whatever their race or religion. Article 9 requires the Mandatory Power to respect the personal status and religious interests of the various communities, and provides for the administration of Waqfs in conformity with religious laws ; this is supplemented by Article 16, which permits

District	Sub-District	Christians	Miscellaneous	Total Population
GAZA . . .		1,313	<u>5</u>	121,096
	Gaza	1,122	—	117,143
	Beersheba	191	5	3,953
LYDDA . . .		20,475	335	445,926
	Jaffa	15,535	323	334,251
	Ramie	4,940	12	111,675
JERUSALEM .		50,299	157	353,333
	Hebron	158	9	83,246
	Jerusalem	40,856	143	222,300
	Ramallah	9,285	5	47,787
SAMARIA . .		3,056	<u>218</u>	222,518
	Tulkarm	437	17	77,330
	Nablus	1,499	200	88,742
	Jenin	1,120	1	56,446
HAIFA . . .		27,118	3,743	203,407
GALILEE . . .		24,922	8,663	247,164
	Nazareth	10,057	13	40,609
	Beisan	627	24	20,308
	Tiberias	2,301	1,199	76,284
	Safad	1,943	602	49,073
	Acre	9,994	6,825	60,890
TOTAL . . .		127,183	13,121	1,593,444

only such control of religious and charitable institutions as is necessary for the maintenance of public order and good administration. Finally, Article 15 guarantees freedom of conscience and of worship, so far as is compatible with public order and good morals ; forbids discrimination on grounds of race, religion and language ; and recognizes the right of communities to maintain their own schools in their own languages, in accordance with the general regulations issued by the Administration.

The application of these, as of other provisions of the Mandate, was supervised by the Permanent Mandates Commission, and ultimately by the Council of the League of Nations so long as it existed. The Commission on one or two occasions made inquiries about the treatment of minorities.

Similar guarantees are to be found in the Palestine Order-in-

Council of 1922, which established the framework of the Administration. Thus Article 83 guarantees freedom of conscience and worship, and states that every religious community recognized by the Government is to enjoy autonomy in its internal affairs, subject to the dispositions of ordinances issued by the High Commissioner. Article 85 gives religious communities and important fractions of the population the right to present to the High Commissioner memoranda complaining of non-fulfilment of the terms of the Mandate.

The question of the political rights of minorities has not yet seriously arisen, because of the absence of any sort of self-government at the centre. But it may be noted that the various schemes for the establishment of a Legislative Council have contained provisions for the representation of the Christians. Thus under the scheme of 1935 one of the 12 elected members of the proposed Council and two of its 11 nominated members were to be Christians.

Communal Organization

The legal basis of the present system of communal jurisdictions is contained in the Palestine Order-in-Council of August 1922. Article 51 states that jurisdiction in matters of personal status will be exercised by the religious communities, and defines these matters as including marriage, divorce, alimony, guardianship, successions, testaments, etc. Another Article (54) gives the tribunals of the Christian communities exclusive jurisdiction in matters of marriage, divorce, alimony and wills, and in regard to the establishment and administration of Waqfs and religious endowments. It also gives them jurisdiction in other matters of personal status, provided that all parties concerned accept it. Article 56 provides for the execution by the civil authorities of the judgements of the religious courts. Finally, Article 57 declares that the constitution and jurisdiction of religious tribunals can be modified by an ordinance or order of the High Commissioner.

Some reference should be made to the present situation of the Greek Orthodox community. It has long been divided by a conflict between the upper ranks of the hierarchy—Patriarch, Bishops and the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre—who are almost wholly Greek in nationality, language and sentiment, and the lower clergy and laity, who are mainly Arab. This conflict,

together with the disordered state of the patriarchal finances and the lack of participation by the laity in the affairs of the Church, has brought about an unsatisfactory state of affairs. Two commissions have been appointed to deal with the matter and various measures have from time to time been taken to remedy the worst features of the situation. Tension between the interested parties has at times been high, but during recent years a determined effort has been made with the help of the Palestine Government to achieve a lasting settlement. In 1938 a draft of an Ordinance repealing the fundamental law governing the affairs of the Patriarchate was published by the Government. This Ordinance gave effect to the substantial measures of agreement which had already been reached on a number of controversial issues in the course of negotiations between the Patriarchate and the Orthodox laity. Further, both parties submitted to the administration suggestions for the modification of the bill, and these suggestions were still under consideration on the outbreak of war.

The Arab Christians : Economic Position

There is a considerable Arab Christian peasantry in a number of districts, particularly in the north of Palestine ; but in general the Arabic-speaking Christians form an urban community. There are many in the large towns, Jerusalem, Jaffa and Haifa; in Ramallah, Bethlehem and Nazareth they form a majority.

According to the census returns of 1931, 18 per cent of the Christians were occupied in pasture and agriculture, as against 67 per cent of the Moslems and 15 per cent of the Jews ; 24 per cent in industry, as against 14 per cent of the Moslems and 28 per cent of the Jews ; and 12 per cent in trade, as against 10 per cent of the Moslems and 16 per cent of the Jews. In general, their occupational distribution differs greatly from that of the Moslems but has a close resemblance to that of the Jews. This is one of the reasons why many of them are as bitterly opposed to Zionism as the Moslems; the Jews are powerful economic competitors.

There is a comparatively high proportion of Christians in Government service. So far as regular, classified Government positions are concerned, there are rather more Arab Christians than Arab Moslems (in 1938 the figures were 1,833 and 1,612 respectively). Only among the unclassified officials, mostly

receiving small salaries, do the Moslems have a majority. The reasons for this are not difficult to find. The Christian community contains more men with higher education than the Moslem. Moreover, the minds of the Christians tend to be quicker and more flexible, and to adapt themselves more readily to Western administrative methods.

The Arab Christians : Educational Position

The following table shows the number of Christian and Moslem students in various types of schools :

	Arab Public Schools	Moslem Private Schools	Christian Private Schools	Total
Christians	4,395	79	18,430	22,904
Moslems	44,305	13,966	4,435	62,706
All Arabs	49,395	14,051	23,004	86,450

From this table two conclusions can be drawn. The first is that the Arab Christians are on the whole better educated than the Moslems. Although they form only 10 per cent of the total Arab population of Palestine, they form 27 per cent of the total Arab school-population. Of the 250,000 Moslem children of school age, only 25 per cent are receiving some sort of education ; and only about 20 per cent of these are girls. But of the 25,000 Christian children, 92 per cent are being educated, over 45 per cent of whom are girls.

These figures become more significant when it is realized that the Christian superiority is even greater in secondary than in primary education. In 1937-8 there were 54 schools giving secondary instruction to 2,733 Arab students. Of the 54 schools, 39 were Christian ; and the vast majority of students in Christian schools are Christians.

The second conclusion to be drawn is that the Christians are receiving a different sort of education from the Moslems. While some 71 per cent of the latter attend Government schools, only 17 per cent of the Christians do so, and the majority of them are at Christian schools. Almost half the latter, with more than half the total students attending them, are controlled by foreign missionary organizations of one sort or another. It is scarcely necessary to point out that students brought up in religious schools, and more especially in foreign missionary schools, may

differ greatly in their beliefs and habits from those brought up in Government or other secular schools.

The Arab Christians and the National Movement

Individual Christians have always been prominent in the Arab national opposition to Zionism. They have been members of the Arab Higher Committee, of the executives of the various parties, and of delegations to London; and they have contributed their share of the funds and the fighters of the movement. The clergy as well as the laity have played their part. Two Arab ecclesiastics gave evidence before the Royal Commission in 1937.

Such organizations as the Christians possess have also supported the national movement. Christian conferences and associations have again affirmed their indissoluble unity with their Moslem brothers. Attempts made by various elements to found a separate Christian party or Committee have been successfully opposed, because such a step might change the national movement into a religious one, and its friendly feelings towards the Christians into hostility. The patriotic attitude of the Christians has always been encouraged by the Moslems, and occasional acts of violence or journalistic attacks upon Christians have been deplored.

The motives of both sides are mixed. Most of the Christians are genuinely patriotic and opposed to Zionism. But they are also moved by the desire to remain on good terms with a majority which may some day obtain political power. The Catholic Christians may well be influenced by the general disapproval with which the Catholic Church regards Zionism. The Moslems for their part have in many cases a genuine sentiment of national community which transcends religious differences. But they are also led to seek Christian co-operation through fear of having the national movement regarded abroad as a fanatical religious movement.

Other Minorities

The other communities raise no problem. The Armenian Christians are an urban community of craftsmen and traders. Some of them are prosperous but they are less important economically than in Egypt, and here, as in Egypt, they take no part in public life. The Druzes and Shi'is are outlying sections of larger communities in Southern Lebanon. They differ in social

organization no less than in religious doctrine and practice from the Sunnis among whom they live, and the traditional distrust which marked their relations with the Sunnis has not yet disappeared. If any pressure were put upon them to conform, they would no doubt react strongly; but they are treated by the Government with full respect for their special position and on a level of complete equality with the majority, and this treatment no doubt will have a good effect in course of time.

In general, the Circassians are not on the best of terms with their Arab neighbours. Their alien language and customs and the circumstances of their coming to the country have embittered relations with the Arab peasantry. So far, they have kept to their own customs and language, and do not intermarry with the Arabs. But it is almost inevitable that sooner or later they should be more or less completely assimilated.

The Baha'is in Haifa are a rich and respected community; some of them own large estates in several parts of Palestine. Persecuted in Persia, and at times by the Ottoman Government, they have never aroused the hostility of the population and keep themselves remote from public life.

The Samaritans are the few survivors of a large community. They still cling to their ritual and traditions, but are slowly dying out owing to their refusal to intermarry with other communities.

Chapter Seven

TRANSJORDAN

Distribution of Minorities

THERE are only two important groups of minorities in Transjordan :

(i) The Arabic-speaking Christians, who number approximately 30,000 ; some 10,000 of them are Greek Orthodox, while most of the remainder are Greek Catholics, Roman Catholics of the Latin rite, and Protestants. They are to be found in the towns and in various country districts.

(ii) The Caucasians, mainly Circassian, of whom there are approximately 12,000. They are concentrated in a few settlements, notably Wadi Sir, Jerash, Naur, Suwaylah and Amman.

Written Guarantees

The Mandate for Palestine and Transjordan imposes on the Mandatory Power the obligation to safeguard the rights of the minorities.¹ These rights were affirmed in the organic law of the country, promulgated in 1928. Article 5 of the law guarantees equality of rights, irrespective of differences in race, religion and language. Article 10 declares that Islam is the religion of the State, but grants liberty of belief and worship to all alike. Article 14 allows the various communities to maintain their own schools in their own languages, and Article 25 provides for the representation of minorities in the legislature. (Of the 16 elected members of the Legislative Assembly, 2 must be Circassian and 3 Christians.)

Articles 49, 53 and 54 of the Organic Law contain provisions for the establishment of communal councils to deal with questions of personal status among non-Moslems. The organization of these councils was defined by the Religious Community Councils Law of 1938. Another law, issued in 1941, gave the civil courts general jurisdiction in matters of succession concerning non-Moslems, but granted the courts the right to refer cases to the religious courts for settlement.

¹ See Chapter Six, *Written Guarantees*.

Social Position

Christians and Circassians alike are mainly engaged in agriculture and pasturage; Transjordan is the only Arab country where there are Christian nomads, almost indistinguishable in their social organization and customs from the Moslems. There are also many Christian traders and government officials, but not enough to make the social structure of the Christians differ materially from that of the Moslems or to arouse the envy or fear of other parts of the population.

Because they do not constitute an economic threat to the majority, and also because they are not used by the Government or by foreign Powers for political ends, the Christians are not hated by the majority and need not in normal circumstances fear discrimination. The same is true in general of the Caucasians. The way in which they were first settled in Transjordan and then used for political purposes by the Ottoman Government has aroused a certain dislike of them; but this is dying out, and here as in Palestine there is no obstacle to their ultimate assimilation.

Chapter Eight

THE LEVANT STATES

The Mandate

FROM the last Peace-Settlement to 1941, France controlled Syria and Lebanon as Mandatory Power : the regions under her control were known collectively as the ' *fitats du Levant sous Mandat Francais* ', of which ' the Levant States ' is a rough English equivalent. After the declaration of Syrian and Lebanese independence in 1941 the Mandate virtually came to an end, although technically it remained in force until the entry of Syria and Lebanon into the United Nations Organization in 1945.

The Mandate for Syria and Lebanon, equally with that for Palestine, paid special attention to the rights of religious communities. Article 8 stated the necessity of guaranteeing the most complete liberty of conscience and worship ; the equal treatment of all inhabitants irrespective of difference of race, religion and language ; and the right of communities to maintain their own schools. Article 16 required the Mandatory Power to respect the personal status and religious interests of the different sections of the population.

In addition, Article 1 authorized the Mandatory Power to encourage local autonomy when circumstances made it possible.

French Policy

French policy in regard to the autonomies was based upon a number of factors : first, the provisions of the Mandate, indicated in the preceding section ; secondly, the traditional connexion between the French Government and the Maronites and other Uniates; thirdly and perhaps most important, the habitual assumption of most French politicians and officials that the Sunni Moslem and Arab nationalist majority was irreconcilably hostile to France. It was an assumption which had several causes : the memory of 1920, when France had imposed herself in Syria against the resistance of the population ; the belief that Arab nationalism was a British invention to extend British influence into the Levant States; and the fear that to make

concessions to nationalism in Syria would encourage it in France's North African possessions.

These considerations led the French Government to follow a policy of strengthening all those elements in the population which were actively pro-French, as well as those which were potentially pro-French through their hostility to the majority. Thus the corporate spirit and separatist feelings of the minorities were deliberately fostered and were made the basis of the political divisions of the Mandated Territories. These divisions were numerous : in 1920 the autonomous district of Lebanon was created an independent State, with greatly increased territories. Subsequently, the remainder of the Mandated area was divided into a number of separate districts: the Government, Province or Territory of the Alawis (or Latakia); the Government ,of Jebel Druze; the State of Syria, which included one district, Alexandretta, which was semi-autonomous, and another, the Jazirah, which in practice was under separate administration. Some of these divisions have since been wiped out: Alexandretta was ceded to Turkey in 1939 ; Latakia, Jebel Druze and the Jazirah have been incorporated in Syria, although Latakia still has a special administrative and financial regime. The division between the Syrian and Lebanese Republics, however, still exists ; and it will be convenient to deal with each of them separately.

Chapter Nine

LEBANON

Distribution of Minorities

THE following table shows the distribution of the Lebanese population by religious confessions and districts on December 31, 1944:

Sect	Muhafazat of Beyrouth	Muhafazat of Mount Lebanon	Muhafazat of North Lebanon	Muhafazat of South Lebanon	Muhafazat of the BIQA'	Total
Sunnis . . .	59,593	20,369	102,462	23,418	29,753	235,595
Shi'is . . .	10,979	18,948	1,017	126,701	51,693	209,338
Druzes . . .	1,926	59,303	34	6,167	6,881	74,311
Maronites . .	15,404	176,248	86,476	27,992	21,726	327,846
Greek Catholics	5,840	15,470	1,841	17,118	24,011	64,280
Greek Orthodox	20,075	22,373	47,522	6,911	13,002	109,883
Protestants	3,760	3,025	750	1,795	1,110	10,440
Latins* . . .	2,191	540	63	179	144	3,117
Armenian Orthodox	36,264	15,379	1,025	1,695	5,386	59,749
Armenian Catholics	5,362	3,091	194	273	1,128	10,048
Syrian Catholics	4,089	275	169	9	442	4,984
Syrian Orthodox	2,070	209	100	22	1,352	3,753
Jews . . .	5,022	65	31	506	42	5,666
Chaldaeans	974	120	1	10	225	1,330
Various . . .	452	359	5,279	52	119	6,261
TOTAL . . .	174,001	335,774	246,964	212,848	157,014	1,126,601

* i.e. Roman Catholics of the Latin rite.

Thus 53 per cent of the Lebanese population is Christian, 46 per cent Moslem. The largest single community is the Maronite, which includes 29 per cent of the population.

Written Guarantees

The Lebanese Constitution, promulgated in 1926, contained

full guarantees for the rights of individuals and communities. Article 9 declared :

La liberté de conscience est absolue. En rendant hommage au Tres-Haut, l'Etat respecte toutes les confessions et en garantit et protège le libre exercice, à condition qu'il ne soit pas porté atteinte à l'ordre public. Il garantit également aux populations, a quelque rite qu'elles appartiennent, le respect de leur statut personnel et de leurs intérêts religieux.

In addition, Article 10 stated that education was free, provided it did not conflict with public order or morals or touch the dignity of the confessions. There would be no infringement of the right of communities to have their schools, under reserve of the general regulations on public education issued by the State.

Personal Status and Communal Organization

Before the war of 1914-18, certain matters of personal status fell within the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts of the *millets* ; while all others were within the competence of the Shariah courts, which were on a higher level than the communal ones. In 1917, at the height of the war, the Ottoman Family Code deprived the Christian and Jewish courts of their jurisdictions, which were conferred on the Shariah tribunals. But this law was never effective and it was annulled in 1921. Soon afterwards the Moslem Shariah courts were placed on a level with those of the other communities by the transfer of all matters of personal status except marriage, divorce, separation, annulment and alimony, to the civil courts. But this measure met with opposition from all sides, and the decree containing it was suspended pending further consideration of the whole subject of personal status.

After several attempts to reform the whole system of jurisdictions had come to nothing, the High Commissioner issued in April 1936 a comprehensive decree defining the position of religious communities. The decree gave explicit legal recognition to the historic communities. Their statutes were given the force of law, and the application of them placed under the protection of the law and the control of the public authorities. They were to enjoy corporate personality, and to be represented in their relations with the public powers by their spiritual heads. Members of the communities would be obliged to conform to their statutes in matters of personal status, and to the civil law

where the statutes of the communities were silent. But anybody who had attained his majority would be at liberty to leave his community and enter a new one. The decree also provided for the recognition of *communautes de droit commun*, in addition to communities possessing personal status jurisdiction. They would enjoy certain rights, such as that of acquiring property, but in matters of personal status their members would be subject to the civil law. This last provision was to apply also to individuals who were not members of any religious community.

This decree was opposed by the ecclesiastical authorities ; and in December 1938 a new one was issued, modifying it at certain points. For example it was now made clear that in cases of secession, children who were minors would follow their father's confession, even after the father's death and even if the mother had the custody of the children after separation or divorce.

The decree of 1938, like that of 1936, was opposed from many sides, and has not been fully carried out. The position of the religious courts is still undefined and unsatisfactory.

Social Structure of the Communities

There is a considerable difference between the social structure of the different communities. The Maronites are mainly an agricultural community : many of the large estates were broken up in the course of the nineteenth century and a class of freehold farmers created. As a whole, the standard of life is higher among them than among most other communities, owing to the fertility of their lands and emigration to the New World. In addition to the farmers, there is a large and prosperous bourgeoisie in Beirut. The force which holds together the community is the Church, whose priests, like those of all the Uniate Churches, are more highly educated than those of the independent Eastern Churches : the Patriarch has immense social power, which is, however, challenged by the large land-owning families with feudal traditions.

The Sunni Moslems are almost wholly an urban community, concentrated in Tripoli, Beirut and Saida. They form a great part of the proletariat of those towns, but there is also a Sunni commercial and professional bourgeoisie and some large land-owning families. They have nothing comparable with either the religious or the temporal solidarity of the Maronites, perhaps because they never had the *millet* organization of Ottoman days.

The Shi'is are mainly peasantry in the southern districts and

in the Bīqa', although they are also to be found in Saida and Sur and in the lower strata of the working-class of Beirut. Economically they are the most backward of the communities and are mostly serfs on the estates of semi-feudal lords. In the Bīqa' their lords are largely Sunnis and Christians, but in the south they are mainly Shi'is, who in the past were practically autonomous; this gives the community a particularly great degree of cohesion.

The Druzes also are mainly an agricultural community, careful farmers, relatively prosperous, and socially the most solidly organized of all the communities. They have a double organization: the religious with its hierarchy, and the feudal with its gradation of ranks. The organization, however, has long been weakened by factional disputes, of which the political rivalry between the great families of Jumblat and Arslan is only the latest phase; and the whole land-system on which it is based is gradually breaking up.

The Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholics are partly peasant communities: they contain a large proportion of small freeholders, prosperous through emigration, and in general are less dominated by large land-owners than are other communities. They also form a considerable part of the commercial class of Beirut and other towns, and indeed include some of the wealthiest trading and land-owning families.

The Armenians

There is another community which differs from all those mentioned above by reason of not speaking Arabic and of having come recently into the country: this is the Armenian community.

There are about 70,000 Armenians in Lebanon. They are mostly of recent settlement in the country. A few were established in Beirut before the war of 1914-18, but most of them entered in successive waves during and after it, fleeing from persecution or from the expectation of it, as in 1939 after the cession of Alexandretta to Turkey. Most of them arrived penniless, and settled in huts on the outskirts of Beirut. But in the last two decades, thanks to their own efforts and to those of the Nansen Office, their economic situation and their living conditions have much improved. They are mainly craftsmen, small traders and office-workers; almost all of them are town-dwellers.

Socially they are still a half-isolated community, centred around their churches. They retain to a large extent their own social

customs and their strong sense of family and national solidarity. They cling to their language and maintain their own schools. They have their own charitable organizations, press and cultural life.

They have not always been popular with the Arabs, even with the Arab Christians. Arab nationalists complain that their presence has given rise to an additional minority-problem, and one particularly difficult to solve. Lebanese Moslems regard them as one of the factors making for Christian predominance ; had it not been for their immigration the Moslems would now have a majority in Lebanon. They are also disliked for having come into the country destitute and being now prosperous. Being concentrated in a relatively small number of urban callings, they are peculiarly open to attack. But their high standard of morality and culture, their energy and persistence make them a good element in the community and will in time remove the prejudice against them.

Educational Differences

There are considerable educational differences between the sects, which spring in general from the fact that education is mainly in the hands of private organizations, largely confessional, or of foreign missionary societies. This is particularly true of secondary and higher education. The Government maintains no higher institutions, except two normal colleges and one technical school; apart from these, all secondary schools and the two Universities (the American University and the Jesuit Université de St. Joseph) are in the hands of private, mainly religious bodies. In 1938, out of 1,867 primary schools, only 177 were Government schools, while 1,180 were controlled by local and 510 by foreign organizations. Of 122 higher schools, 3 were governmental, 44 local and 75 foreign.

Of the local private schools, by far the greatest number is controlled by the Maronite, Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic communities ; while the majority of the foreign schools are owned by French Catholic missions. Thus, Lebanese education is predominantly Christian and clerical in spirit and control, and more particularly Catholic.

The proportion of Christian children who attend religious schools as against those who attend Government schools is much greater than the corresponding proportion among Moslems.

Moreover, the total number of Christian scholars is far greater than that of Moslems, particularly in secondary and higher education.

Several conclusions may be drawn from these facts. First, education does nothing to diminish communal differences but rather the opposite, since for the most part it is under communal control. Secondly, the Christian communities are as a rule more highly educated than the Moslem, and this leads to obvious differences in their social and economic structure. Thirdly, the Christians in general are receiving a different kind of education from the Moslems: this is particularly true of the Maronites and other Uniates, who have gone far towards adopting French civilization and the French language as their own.

Christians and Moslems

Apart from the differences between particular sects, there is a general division between Christians and Moslems which is not quite the same as that existing in the neighbouring countries. Lebanon is the only Arabic-speaking country in which the Christians have managed to preserve an autonomous Christian life, both individual and social, and to resist the tendency to moral and social assimilation. This is particularly true of the Maronites, who have never been deprived of connexion with the main body of Western Christendom, thanks to their position on the Mediterranean coast, to their traditional connexion with the French Government and to the work of Catholic missions among them.

The position of the Moslems also is unusual. The Sunnis are outnumbered by Druzes and Shi'is combined, and are thus far from being in a majority or from being able to construct a solid Moslem block, but they still retain to some extent the mentality of a ruling community. As has been mentioned, before the French occupation, the coastal towns in which most of the Sunnis live did not form part of Lebanon, but of the Ottoman vilayet of Beirut; by their transfer to Lebanon they found themselves changed suddenly from a ruling group to one sect among many in a State with a largely Christian atmosphere. This is a change which has been difficult for them to accept.

Greater and Small Lebanon

Still another significant distinction is that between the old

Sanjak of Lebanon and the districts which were added to it by the French to make the Lebanese Republic, and which had formerly been part of the vilayets of Beirut and Damascus. The inhabitants of the former are mainly Maronites, Druzes and Greek Catholics ; the latter include Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholics in all parts, Armenians in Beirut, Sunnis in the coastal towns, Shi'is in the south and the Biqa'. The former have a tradition—a political tradition of autonomy, a social tradition of feudalism, a tradition of religious tolerance—which binds them together and which was sufficiently strong to make the autonomous Sanjak function successfully ; the latter, however, are not part of the Lebanese tradition and do not possess any common tradition of their own. In addition, at least one of the communities, the Sunnis, and important elements in most of the others, never wanted to be incorporated in Greater Lebanon. The tension between those communities which are part of the real Lebanon and those which are not still continues.

French Policy

A State so deeply divided both in structure and in ideas as the Lebanese Republic and without any unifying national spirit could not continue to exist, at least in its present form, unless there were some external power controlling it closely and interfering continually in its affairs. Until 1943, this external control was provided by the Mandatory Power. Her policy was directed towards making Lebanon a bulwark of French influence. This aim had led to the creation of an independent Lebanon and the extension of its frontiers. It also inspired the attempts to maintain a Christian majority in spite of the extension of the frontiers and the more rapid increase of the Moslem population : this was one of the reasons for the settlement of the Armenian refugees around Beirut. Every attempt was made to attach the Christians more closely to France : by the rapid and systematic spread of French culture, by favouring the Christians in political and administrative matters and by playing upon their fears of Moslem persecution. An analogous appeal was made to the heterodox Moslems, although to a less extent; and even with the Sunnis an attempt was made to Gallicize them by means of education.

Among the Christians preference was given to the Uniates and more particularly to the Maronites, who regarded themselves and were generally regarded as the dominant element in the life of the

Republic. At the same time, however, an attempt was made to keep the other sects hopeful and satisfied enough to prevent them trying to break up the Republic. This was done by the careful distribution of posts, large and small, among members of the different sects, and by the encouragement of Lebanese particularist feeling.

Sectarianism in Politics

In a country divided so fundamentally and in so many different ways, it has not been possible to create any genuine sense of solidarity. From its beginning, at least until 1943, the Lebanese Republic was only held together by the control and constant intervention of France; within the framework provided by that control, sectarian feeling maintained and even increased its strength.

The Constitution of the Lebanese Republic, promulgated in 1926, provided for a political organization which should take into account the sectarian divisions of the country. It laid down two principles. The first was that all Lebanese citizens were equal before law, possessed of the same rights and duties, and equally admissible to all public offices, without any distinction (Articles 7 and 12). The other was that, at least provisionally, the confessions should be equitably represented in public offices and in the Ministry, in so far as that did not detract from the welfare of the State (Article 95).

All parts of the political organization of the State show the influence of these principles. Thus the President of the Republic has always been a Christian. To counterbalance this, the Prime Minister has usually been a Sunni Moslem, and the other Ministries have been distributed among the confessions. The Chamber of Deputies, during periods when it has been functioning, has been so composed as to represent the confessions roughly in proportion to their numerical strength; deputies have been elected by their co-religionists, organized for the purpose on a confessional as well as a geographical basis.

In matters of appointments and promotions in the public service, the equitable representation of the sects is a more important consideration than merit, in the minds not only of those who make appointments but also of the public, and more especially of the leaders of the different communities, who watch closely to see that the balance is not overturned.

The political parties of the country, like its other political institutions, try at least on the surface to be inter-sectarian. Their officials, committees and electoral candidates are usually drawn from a number of sects. Their programmes usually contain some reference to the need of an ideal of national unity to replace existing sectarian jealousies. Sometimes this is genuine, sometimes not. Parties which emphasize Lebanese independence are most often Maronite in inspiration and membership ; parties of Arab unity are similarly (though to a less extent) Moslem.

Political Conceptions

In such circumstances it is inevitable that there should arise very varying conceptions of what Lebanon is and ought to be : to a limited degree the differences in ideas correspond to differences of religious confession. Roughly it is possible to distinguish five main views of Lebanon :

(i) There are some who regard Lebanon as an integral part of Arab Asia, with no essential social or political difference from other parts and no special mission or purpose. They want Lebanon to be wholly absorbed into a Syrian or Arab State, with no autonomy but special provisions for the personal status and religious education of the minorities, such as exist in other Arab regions.

(ii) Others admit that Lebanon's past history has given it a character of its own and created a gap between it and the other Arab regions. But they deny that the distinctive character of Lebanon confers upon it special duties or a mission ; they regard the special characteristics as no more than historical relics which will disappear sooner or later. They are willing to grant a certain degree of Lebanese autonomy or even complete independence, but only as a temporary expedient, with the object of allaying the fears of the minorities and gradually persuading them to accept complete union with a Syrian or Arab state.

(iii) Others again regard Lebanon as primarily a place of refuge where persecuted minorities can live in peace. They want it therefore to be wholly separate from the hinterland, and do not care what form of government exists so long as it is strong enough so protect them.

(iv) Another idea is. that of Lebanon as a Mediterranean Christian country: not the western edge of the Arabic Moslem world but the eastern edge of Western Christendom. It is in

no essential sense a part of the Arab world, but its people constitute a separate nation. It should therefore be an independent State with its face turned towards Europe.

(v) There are others who try to extract and combine the element of truth in all these views. They admit that Lebanon is an Arab country by character and by destiny ; but they believe that its special traditions confer upon it a special destiny in the Arab world : as a centre of Arab Christian life, as a gateway to the West and as a place where adherents of different religions can meet on absolutely equal terms.

Speaking generally and with large reservations, one may say that the first idea is held mainly by Sunni Moslems ; the second by Moslem Arab nationalists and those Christians who believe that a lay nationalism is possible and desirable ; the third by members of all minorities, particularly among the older generation ; the fourth mainly by Maronites and other Uniates ; and the fifth by Christians who want to remain fully Christian while being fully Arab nationalists.

These differences of conception involve different points of view on various particular issues :

(i) The question of the frontiers of Lebanon. In general, those who regard Lebanon as a separate entity have wished to preserve the frontiers of 1920, since otherwise it would be even less defensible and economically self-supporting than at present. The adherents of the first two views on the contrary have wished to return to the frontiers of the old Sanjaq, possibly with the addition of Beirut.

(ii) Many of those who regard Lebanon as an independent country or as a refuge wish it to be under the protection of a Western Power which will take in it an interest which is more than political. For most of them that Western Power must be France, but there are others who would prefer Great Britain or the United States. Those who regard Lebanon as in any sense a part of the Arab world, however, consider such protection too dangerous both for Lebanon and for the Arab world to be permitted.

(iii) A great many of those for whom Lebanon is a separate country recognize nevertheless that she must have a close connexion with Syria and other Arabic-speaking countries; but they insist that it must be based upon formal equality. The other countries must recognize the independent existence of

Lebanon, and then the way will be open for close relations, particularly in the economic sphere. As against this, those who hold either of the first two views look forward to a time when Lebanon will be a province, at most an autonomous province, of a Syrian or Arab State. The adherents of the fifth view, however, hope to see Lebanon a member-state of a Syrian or Arab federation, with the same status and freedom of action as other member-states.

Developments since 1941

From 1926, when the Lebanese Republic was established and its political machinery began to function, until 1941 there was no essential change in the structure of Lebanon. In 1936, it is true, a Franco-Lebanese Treaty was negotiated which provided for the complete independence of Lebanon after a number of years, but it was not ratified.

In 1941, soon after the occupation of the Levant States by Allied Forces, General Catroux proclaimed the independence of Lebanon in a document which stated, among other things, that the Government of Lebanon would guarantee equality of civil, religious and political rights among all its nationals without any distinction.

In 1943 the first steps were taken to carry out the policy of independence by the holding of elections for the Chamber. The composition and actions of the Chamber and of the Ministry which emanated from it showed that a considerable change had taken place in the ideas and positions of the different sects during the past few years.

(i) The greater part of the politically conscious Lebanese desire an extension of autonomy, and are no longer willing to tolerate as great a measure of foreign interference in their internal affairs as under the French Mandate.

(ii) There is an increasing number who wish to end the French connexion altogether. This group is composed of two sections : first, those who still want foreign protection but believe that France is no longer capable of giving it, and therefore look to Great Britain to replace her; secondly, those who repudiate the whole idea of protection and believe that the only security for the special position of Lebanon lies in the good will of the neighbouring countries.

(iii) Many Arab nationalists who formerly desired the reduction

of Lebanon to its old frontiers or even the almost complete abolition of its autonomy now desire to preserve the enlarged Lebanon at least as a temporary expedient: Greater Lebanon with its large (and increasing) Moslem population is much less whole-heartedly separatist than a smaller mainly Maronite Lebanon would be, and in addition it provides the possibility for the development of a non-sectarian Arab nationalism. For the same reasons, many Lebanese nationalists now desire to return to the smaller Lebanon, with its large Christian majority.

All these problems were involved in the Franco-Lebanese crisis of November 1943. As a result of that crisis Lebanon secured a greater degree of self-government. A further step was taken in 1944, when representatives of the Lebanese Government participated in the conference of Alexandria which laid the foundations of the League of Arab States. The Protocol issued at the end of the conference in October contained a special appendix guaranteeing the independence of Lebanon within its present frontiers on condition that the Lebanese Government pursued the policy of independence which had been adopted in 1943. In 1945-6 agreement was finally reached on the withdrawal of British and French troops from Lebanon, whose independence thus became virtually complete. The deeper problems, however, of the structure of Lebanon and its relation to the outside world still remain.

Chapter Ten

SYRIA

Distribution of Minorities

THE table on page 76 shows the distribution of the Syrian population by religious confessions and provinces.

Written Guarantees

The Syrian Constitution issued in 1930 contains formal guarantees for the good treatment of minorities. Article 6 states that all Syrians are equal before the law, enjoy the same civil and political rights and shall not suffer discrimination on grounds of religion, race or language. Article 15 guarantees liberty of conscience and worship, and respect for the religious interests and personal status of all sects. Their educational and other rights are guaranteed by Article 28. Article 26 states that all Syrians are eligible for public offices without distinction. Finally, Article 37 lays down that the electoral law shall provide for the representation of confessional minorities. (This has in fact been done : every Chamber elected since the issue of the Constitution has contained an appropriate number of representatives of the minorities.)

Personal Status and Communal Organization

Until 1938, the law of personal status underwent much the same changes in Syria as in Lebanon. The same attempts were made to reform it, and met with the same obstacles. The most recent attempt was made in November 1938, when the High Commissioner issued a decree modifying and completing the decree issued in 1936 but never applied.

It met with bitter opposition, both religious and political. The Ulema objected to it on the ground that it contravened the Shariah. It allowed conversion from one sect to another, while the Shariah condemned apostasy. It gave to the heads of the communities the right of representing their communities *vis-a-vis* the authorities ; but the Shariah recognised no such rights of representation. It laid down that the son should follow the

	Damascus	Aleppo	Homs	Hama	Hauran	Euphrates	Jazirah	Jebel Druze	Latakia	Total
Yazidis	6	1,307	—	—	—	—	1,475	—	—	2,788
Druzes	15,394	1,601	—	—	—	4	—	70,185	—	87,184
Armenian Catholics	2,170	9,644	1,496	49	107	616	1,863	150	695	16,790
Armenian Orthodox	16,852	67,598	1,523	615	24	1,679	7,925	354	5,177	101,747
Maronites	1,075	3,659	554	38	3	71	56	106	7,787	13,349
Protestants	1,589	3,053	1,746	529	27	27	453	389	3,374	11,187
Chaldaeans	190	2,281	22	1	—	243	1,944	—	38	4,719
Syrian Catholics	3,261	6,127	3,052	259	—	697	2,851	—	—	16,247
Syrian Orthodox	1,014	5,492	14,309	682	59	763	17,793	16	7	40,135
Latins (i.e. Roman Catholics of the Latin rite)	483	3,938	431	12	—	25	29	4	1,074	5,996
Jews	13,673	14,066	—	—	10	72	1,938	10	1	29,770
Greek Catholics	20,552	11,964	3,792	364	4,857	25	70	2,735	2,374	46,733
Greek Orthodox	23,791	9,411	20,297	17,395	2,852	159	336	4,560	58,156	136,957
Alawis	4,022	2,698	22,219	15,083	370	78	93	95	280,653	325,311
Isma'ilis	18	31	13	20,541	—	12	8	—	7,904	28,527
Shi'is	355	9,071	2,725	205	4	—	326	56	—	12,742
Sunnis	499,444	718,198	140,245	101,685	104,529	220,552	99,665	1,468	85,267	1,971,053
Nestorians	—	—	—	—	—	—	9,176	—	—	9,176
* Total	603,889	870,139	212,424	157,458	112,842	225,023	146,001	80,128	452,507	2,860,411

* The total figures do not include the Beduins, who are nominally Moslems and number perhaps 400,000.

religion of his father in certain cases in which the two parents belonged to different sects, whereas the Shariah required him to follow the religion of his Moslem parent.

The Ulema presented a memorandum to the Nationalist Government of Jamil Mardam Bey, setting forth these and other theological objections and protesting against the decree. The Government was sympathetic to them, not only because of its desire to keep on good terms with orthodox Islam, but also because of the political circumstances of the moment. Franco-Syrian relations were strained, owing to the failure of the French Government to secure the ratification of the Treaty of 1936. The Syrian Ministry resented the way in which the decree had been issued by the High Commissioner, over its own head and that of the Chamber. When the Ulema presented their memorandum to the Prime Minister, he replied that his Government was not willing to accept the decree, and soon afterwards the Minister of Justice issued instructions to the Courts not to apply it.

Shortly afterwards, for this and other reasons, the Government resigned. The High Commissioner had triumphed on the constitutional question. Subsequently, however, in view of the passions which the decree had aroused, he issued a new one excluding Moslems from the application of the laws of 1936 and 1938. No further step to regularize the situation has been taken since then.

Divisions of the Country

The figures given in the first section show that there are three districts of Syria in which the Arab Sunnis do not possess a majority : they are Jebel Druze, where the Druzes are in the majority, Latakia, with a majority of Alawis, and the Jazirah, which is divided between Kurds, Arab Moslems and Christians of different kinds. It will be convenient to describe each of these districts separately before dealing with the remainder of the country.

Jebel Druze

Jebel Druze was settled in the course of the nineteenth century by Druzes coming from Lebanon in order to escape Turkish government, military service, foreign interference, Christian rivalry and in general all restrictions upon their liberty to follow

their traditional customs and manage their own affairs. The Druzes now constitute the overwhelming majority in the Jebel.

Before the First World War, the Druzes were almost completely autonomous. Turkish attempts to subdue them were not successful, and Turkish suzerainty was no more than a name. Their relations with the Sunni Arabs were equally distant. The isolation in which the Druzes lived throughout the nineteenth century helped to preserve certain elements in their society which might otherwise have been modified: dislike of all kinds of interference and attachment to their feudal organization.

The particularism of the Druzes would be a problem for any form of government. The nature of the problem, however, has been in some ways modified during the present generation. On the one hand the French encouraged the particularist spirit throughout the Mandatory period. They maintained that the Druzes could not be treated like the other sections of the Syrian population, but needed a special regime which, while taking into account the strength of their conservatism, would aim at modifying such of their customs as did not conform to modern ideas of civilization. Such an administration, they claimed, could best be given them by officials drawn from their own great families, controlled by French advisers and fortified by French education.

On the other hand, the rising nationalist movement starts from the assumption that the Druzes are Arabs who have developed peculiar customs and traditions by reason of their history and isolation. They need to be re-absorbed into the Arab nation, politically and socially, and to be made conscious of themselves as Arabs. Whatever special regime be granted them must therefore be limited in extent and temporary.

Among the Druzes themselves there are parties which support each of these two policies. There are those who desired and still desire formal autonomy under French protection, and others who want Jebel Druze to become fully a part of a Syrian or Arab State; there is also a very large group who want protection and interference from no one and wish only to be left alone. This conflict of ideas is related in various complex ways to the social conflict which is now beginning in the Jebel. The lesser land-owners are restless under the domination of the Atrash, the leading family of the region; and for the first time the peasants are beginning to question the feudal system under which they have lived for so long.

The Territory of the Alawis

The province or territory of the Alawis, also known as the Province of Latakia (its official name has been changed several times) includes the Jebel Ansariya and the coastal plain at its foot. It is in many ways a natural unit, and the greater part of the population which inhabits it possesses a distinctive character. Sixty per cent of the population are Alawis, and the others are in more or less equal parts Sunni Moslems and Christians, mainly Greek Orthodox. In and around the town of Latakia itself, the Sunnis form the largest single community.

The Alawis are probably descendants of the indigenous inhabitants of the district, who have endured a number of conquerors and have managed to preserve their individuality, with various accretions from the cultures and religions of their overlords. Under the Turks they possessed local autonomy while acknowledging the suzerainty of the Sultan, until the nineteenth century, when the Ottoman Government succeeded in imposing its authority upon them. In practice, however, local autonomy meant local tyranny, since the region, like the rest of Syria, was organized on a feudal basis and the peasants suffered the unrestrained rule of their lords.

The problem of the Alawis is in some ways similar to that of the Druzes: an isolated, backward peasantry, tenacious of its individuality, ruled by feudal lords and brought into contact, during the present generation, with a Western power having interest in Syria and with the forces of Arab nationalism. The divisions of opinion expounded in the preceding section exist here also. There are, however, certain additional factors which do not exist in Jebel Druze and which complicate the situation. First, the Alawis are divided among themselves into a number of sects; largely because of this, there is no ruling family as powerful among them as the Atrash among the Druzes, but a number of great families at rivalry with one another. Secondly, the existence of large Sunni and Christian communities gives rise to difficulties. In general they are more advanced than the Alawis; they form a large part of the town population, and in addition much of the land is owned by Sunnis. The Sunnis would never submit to be a minority in an autonomous Alawi region, the more so since nationalist governments in Damascus would probably favour them above any other section **of the population.** All the Sunnis and many Greek **Orthodox desire**

the complete incorporation of the district in Syria; but others of the Christians would prefer it either to be autonomous or to be incorporated in Lebanon.

The Jazirah

Before the First World War, the Jazirah, the north-eastern province of Syria, was empty except for Beduin tribes and some Kurdish villages. The land was thinly cultivated, and the standard of living low; life was insecure and government scarcely existed. When the French occupied Syria, they established a certain measure of public security, and this increased the attraction for settlers which the Jazirah already had by virtue of its fertility. The Mandatory authorities encouraged the settlement of members of Christian minorities who had been dislodged from their homes in Turkey by persecution. In the last twenty years many thousands of Armenians, Jacobites, Syrian Catholics and Assyrians, and in addition some thousands of Kurdish Moslems have moved into the province. New towns and villages have been created, new crops introduced and the district opened up to commerce.

The present population of the Jazirah falls into three main divisions. First there are the Arab tribes, of which the most important is the Shammar. Some of them breed camels and are fully nomadic; others have taken to raising sheep and become semi-nomadic, or else have turned into wholly sedentary farmers. Secondly, there are the Kurds, who are themselves split up in various ways. They are divided into tribes; in addition some are nomadic, others semi-nomadic and others again sedentary. There is a further distinction between those Kurds who have long been settled in the district and who are largely Arabized, and those who have come in during the present generation and still preserve their Kurdish language and characteristics. Among these, Kurdish nationalism is strong, and has been encouraged by French officials.

Thirdly, there are the Christian immigrants, who are divided among a number of sects. Some of them are Arabic-speaking Greek Orthodox and Catholics, others Armenians; in addition, there are Syrian Orthodox and Catholics, Assyrians and Chaldeans who either speak Syriac or have abandoned it too recently for Arabic to have acquired any Arab national sentiment. Of them all, the Assyrians are those who have aroused the most interest

in the outer world. About 9,000 of them have settled in the Jazirah since they crossed the frontier from Iraq during the troubles of 1933.¹ A Board of Trustees, appointed by the Council of the League of Nations and administering funds contributed by the Governments concerned and by the League, built villages and bought land for them. At the beginning of 1941, when their economic position was satisfactory, their special administrative and fiscal regime came to an end and they became an integral part of the Syrian State. Since then their economy has been dislocated by the enlistment of a large proportion of their members in the Iraq levies.

Split up between a large number of sects and peoples, none of which dominates the rest, and lacking the element of stability which would be furnished by a long-settled population, the Jazirah presents a complex problem which is intensified by a number of factors : tension between Christians and Moslems and between Arabs and Kurds ; the eternal enmity of Beduin and settled folk ; the influence of the clergy and particularly of French missionaries; and interference by Turkey from just across the frontier.

During the years of Mandatory rule, French policy was to give the Jazirah strong and sympathetic administration, and so enable the immigrants to settle down in their new homes, and also to keep the Jazirah separate from the rest of Syria. The nationalists, on the other hand, wish to avoid at all costs the creation of another problem similar to that of Jebel Druze or the Alawis ; they therefore insist that the district must be ruled from Damascus, sympathetically but without any concession to separatist feeling. Of the inhabitants, some of the Beduin, Kurds, Greek Orthodox and other Christians are in favour of the rule of Damascus, but a large number both of Kurds and of Christians would prefer autonomy under Western protection. The most important advocate of autonomy is the Syrian Catholic Patriarch, Cardinal Tappouni. The Kurdish and Christian autonomists, however, although united in opposition to Arab nationalism, are not in agreement on many other questions.

The Arab Christians

Most of what has been said about the social and economic position of the Christians in the other Arabic countries applies

¹ See Chapter Eleven.

equally to Syria. The Christians still form a social unit, or rather a series of inter-connected social units, the relations of which with the Moslem community are largely formal. This is especially true of the older generation brought up under the Ottoman regime. The introduction of freer social customs from the West, the spread of education and the growth of the idea of the nation between them are helping to make the younger generation less conscious of its confessional ties, and may in the end succeed in breaking down the barriers between the sects.

Western ideas and forces have so far made little impression outside the few large towns. In the smaller towns and the villages, traditions still rule unchecked, and the old social exclusiveness of the sects still persists. But on the other hand the very nature of life in small towns or villages tends to the assimilation of the social characteristics of the minorities to those of the majority. Moreover, it encourages economic interdependence and co-operation. Economically, the Christian do not differ much from the Moslem peasants. It is only in the large towns that the economic structure of the Christian communities diverges from that of the majority. The educational progress of the Christians has been swifter than that of the Moslems, and has diverged from it in some ways. In 1938 the Christians accounted for about 32 per cent of the total school population, although they form only 19 per cent of the population as a whole. They account for an even larger proportion of the pupils of secondary schools; and although only 20 per cent of the students of the University in Damascus are Christians, many others are studying at the Universities in Beirut, or in Europe.

It must be noticed also that 32 per cent of the Christian students attend foreign schools, 61 per cent private schools and only 7 per cent official ones. Almost all the foreign schools are controlled by Christian missions, although some are owned by the French * Mission Laïque ', and about 170 out of the 294 private schools are controlled by Christian communities. Thus, the Christians are not only obtaining more education than the Moslems, but it is education of a different sort. Individual Christians play an important part in the national movement, in Syria as elsewhere. The most prominent of them in recent times have been the brothers Faris and Faiz al-Khuri, the former of whom was President of the Chamber of Deputies from 1936 to 1939 and again in 1943-4, and became Prime Minister in 1944.

It is not simply isolated individuals who feel sympathy with the national movement. Sympathy is widespread among the Greek Orthodox, who are altogether Arab in culture and feeling. This is true of the clergy as well as the laity, and of the higher clergy as well as the lower: the Bishop of Hama was Vice-President of the Pan-Arab Conference of Bludan in 1937. The younger generation, brought up under the influence of nationalistic ideas in school and out of it, tend to be as wholly devoted to the Arab cause as their Moslem contemporaries.

Roman Catholics and Uniates tend to be less sympathetic, partly because they are less conscious and proud of their Arab tradition; partly because they are much influenced by French Catholic missions and schools; and partly because of all sections of the population they have been the best treated by the French authorities, so that the relaxation of French control means loss of their privileged position.

The leaders of the national movement have always professed the best possible intentions towards the Christians and have been quick to disown anything which might give the opposite impression. The periodical crises of nationalistic feeling have been accompanied by scenes of Moslem-Christian fraternization. This attitude on the part of the leaders often arises from a genuine desire to build a national unity which will transcend religious differences and make them less acute; or else from a desire not to alienate Western opinion, which tends to care more for minorities than for majorities.

Although the more enlightened nationalists are tolerant, among those who are less enlightened there still exists considerable suspicion of the Christians as a whole. It springs not only from ancient prejudice; it is due to the fact that certain of the Christians, not wholly against their will, have been used by the French as instruments of domination and as a pretext for delaying the grant of independence. Once the problem of Franco-Arab relations is definitely settled, the tension between Moslems and Christians will gradually be relaxed.

The Armenians

In general, the Armenians in Syria do not need special attention. Most of what has been said about their fellow-countrymen in Lebanon is true of them also. It is necessary only to call attention to the special situation existing in Aleppo, where the Armenian

element is particularly large and important. It numbers 60,000 ; many of these have long been resident in the town, while others came in during the period of persécution. Their economic position is strong. Almost wholly urban in occupation, they are particularly prominent in certain branches of trade and industry and a number of crafts. They are also numerous in the free professions, but there are few of them in government service because of their general ignorance of Arabic. As the largest unassimilated element in the population, their presence was at first resented by the nationalists, who regarded them as a complicated problem and an instrument of foreign interference ; the more reasonable nationalists understand, however, that the only possible policy is not to treat them as enemies but to help them to become loyal citizens and to be at least outwardly assimilated to the majority. There are some of the * Tashnak ', the Armenian nationalists, who are opposed to any degree of assimilation and wish to preserve their culture and customs until such time as they can return to an independent Armenia. Others, however, and perhaps the larger part, are willing to co-operate with the majority and sacrifice something of their individuality, either permanently or at least until they can return to their own country. They are the more willing to work with the Arabs because of their fear of Turkey, which has increased greatly since the cession of Alexandretta. During the Franco-Syrian crisis of 1945, the Armenians as a whole threw in their lot with the nationalists and resisted all attempts of the French authorities to make use of them.

In recent years they have been much influenced by the U.S.S.R. and the favourable treatment which is being given to its smaller nationalities in political and cultural matters, and now in foreign affairs as well. It is probable that the majority of them would want to emigrate to Soviet Armenia if they were given the opportunity.

Other Minorities

Most of the minorities are of no great importance. Thus, the Jews in Damascus and Aleppo are small communities of craftsmen and traders, Arabic-speaking and externally assimilated. Many of them have emigrated to the New World and in general they are becoming Europeanized quickly. Although for the most part they are not Zionists, Zionism has affected them ; very many

of them have settled in Palestine, and those who are left cannot be wholly unaffected by the rising wave of Arab hostility to Zionism.

The Isma'ilis form a compact community, backward and without any political claims except to be left alone. The Turcomans also raise no problem in themselves. Originally a nomadic community, they have now become agricultural, and in some regions they have been completely Arabized. The Circassians, however, have resisted assimilation more successfully. They still remain as a separate entity with their own language and customs, and have even at times claimed autonomy. Both in Turkish times and under the Mandate they have been used by the authorities to hold down the population ; the French for example used them to suppress the Syrian Revolution of 1925. This has made them disliked by the Arabs ; but there is no obstacle to their ultimate assimilation.

The Kurds are of much greater importance. There are over 100,000 of them in the north of the country, mainly in the foothills of the Taurus north of Aleppo, and 20,000 in Damascus. Most of them have been in the country for generations, but some have fled from Turkey in the last twenty years. Almost all are Sunni Moslems, but there are some Kurdish-speaking Yazidis, Christians and Alawis. The language of the majority is Kurdish, but many are bi-lingual in Kurdish and Arabic, and some, particularly in Damascus, speak only Arabic. There is a gradual process of assimilation going on among them, helped by their backward cultural state ; they have practically no facilities for education except in Arabic.

Originally nomads, they have now mostly settled on the land as peasants. They are dominated by their land-owning class, but less so than formerly. Although sedentary, they still preserve their tribal organization, and on the whole tribal loyalty is still much stronger among them than national loyalty.

In general, they are whole-heartedly opposed to Turkey, are suspicious of Arab nationalism, friendly to the U.S.S.R. and grateful to France for the favourable treatment they have received. Kurdish nationalism is strong among some groups of them, particularly those in Damascus. Damascus and Beirut, indeed, have become the main centres of the Kurdish national and cultural movement, directed largely by the Badr Khan brothers. The nationalists do not for the most part expect independence,

but they claim autonomy in the Jazirah or at least the right to live as Kurds, immune from attempts to force them to assimilate.

French Policy

France's hostility to Arab nationalism led her to show special favour to the minorities in Syria. This policy revealed itself in numerous administrative acts, and in such military acts as the recruitment of special detachments from Circassians, Kurds and other minorities, but it is most clearly shown and has had the most important consequences in regard to the two compact minorities, the Druzes and Alawis.

In 1921 an agreement was concluded between the French authorities and some of the Druze leaders, providing for a national government assisted by French advisers. From this time until 1936 there existed a 'Government of Jebel Druze' independent of Syria and under all-pervasive French control. At first, French policy ran counter to local susceptibilities, and this led to the Druze Revolt of 1925, which became a Syrian national revolt. After the suppression of the revolt, the same system was continued, and was formalized by the Organic Law of 1930. Its effect was to encourage the particularist feeling of the Druzes and to arouse among certain of them a feeling of gratitude to France.

Another autonomous territory was created in the 'Territory' or 'Government' of the Alawis, set up in 1920. It possessed an administrative system similar to that of Jebel Druze, formalized in a similar organic law issued in 1930, and under a still stricter French control. The administration did something to improve the very backward condition of the Alawis and to arouse among them a corporate self-consciousness and a feeling of attachment to France. In general, the district was peaceful after unrest at the beginning; the only disturbances came from the Sunnis and Greek Orthodox, who believed their interests were being neglected and demanded the attachment of the district to Syria.

Nationalism and the Minorities

The leaders of Arab nationalism in Syria recognize the importance of the minority problem and have made considerable efforts to win the confidence of the minorities. In principle they regard Arab Christians as on a level with Moslems inside the Arab community, once they are willing to accept their obligations as

members of the Arab nation. As for the linguistic minorities, they insist on a certain degree of assimilation, but there is no question of treating them as inferiors because of their racial origins.

They are opposed, however, to the grant of a special regime to minorities, since it would only perpetuate their difference; and even more strongly would they oppose any foreign intervention or influence in support of the minorities. In regard to the compact minorities, while they recognize the need for careful and tactful administration, they believe they are capable of giving such administration, and wholly reject the claims of the autonomists, both because the grant of autonomy would play into the hands of foreign powers eager to intervene, and because, so long as they remained autonomous, the minorities would never learn how to live with their fellow-nationals.

The Treaty of 1936 and the Minorities

The autonomy of Jebel Druze and the Alawis was brought to an end by the Franco-Syrian Treaty of 1936. In December of that year decrees were issued annexing the two Governments to the Syrian Republic as the Provinces of Jebel Druze and Latakia respectively. Certain safeguards were, however, provided for the special position of the two provinces. On the one hand, they were given a special administration and financial regime. On the other, the military convention attached to the Treaty stipulated for the maintenance of French troops in both districts for a period of five years from the coming into force of the Treaty.

At the same time, the administration of the Jazirah was placed under the control of the Government of Damascus ; it had never been formally autonomous but in practice had been under direct French administration since the establishment of civil government there.

In each of these three districts there was a group which welcomed the union with Syria, and others who thought it in their interest to side with the nationalists who seemed to be the rising power. Others again did not object to incorporation in Syria, so long as the special position of the provinces was respected and they were fairly treated in such matters as government appointments. There were some, however, who desired to return to complete autonomy under French protection. From 1937

to 1939 this last group grew stronger, and more or less brought administration to a standstill. There were a number of reasons for this. The Government was hasty and tactless ; some of its supporters were intolerant. The fears and suspicions of the minorities were too strong to be overcome in a few months, and there can be no doubt that they were played upon by some of the French officials who refused to accept the change of policy laid down in the Treaty of 1936.

In 1937 and again in 1939, Jebel Druze was disturbed. In Latakia discontent grew gradually but did not become serious until the rising of a section of the Alawis led by Suleiman Murshid, a self-made notable and self-styled god. In 1937 a section of the Kurds and of the Christians of the Jazirah caused disturbances. Their case was strengthened by the support of Cardinal Tappouni, the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch. Again in 1939, there were manifestations on a large scale.

Meanwhile, relations between the French Government and the nationalists had been growing worse, owing to the reluctance of the former to secure the ratification of the Treaty. By 1939, France had reversed the policy inaugurated in 1936. In July 1939, the Constitution was suspended. Almost simultaneously decrees were issued restoring the autonomy of the Jebel Druze and the Alawis. At the same time the Jazirah was placed once more under direct French rule ; but by December 1940, matters had returned to normal and, once more, the authority of the Syrian Government was imposed in the Jazirah.

It was not only the compact minorities which had been restless during these years. The scattered minorities also had been apprehensive of nationalist policy towards them. They had not been persecuted on any large scale, and officially the Government had frequently declared its desire to treat all citizens equally ; but there had been enough acts of discrimination to appear to justify the pre-conceived fears of the minorities. It was partly to allay these fears that the Syrian Government concluded supplementary agreements with the French Government in 1937 and 1938, containing among other things guarantees for the position of communities and individuals.

The difficulties of the situation must not, however, be exaggerated. Not all minorities were equally hostile to nationalism. Those which were most hostile were the Catholics, who had profited most from French rule ; others, like the Greek Orthodox

and a section of the Armenians, were able to maintain good relations with the Government. In general, what troubles occurred were no more than were inevitable in a period of transition.

Developments since 1941

In September 1941, General Catroux proclaimed the independence of Syria. His proclamation contained the following statement about minorities :

Free France considers that the State of Syria forms politically and territorially an indivisible unity, of which the integrity ought to be preserved against any dismemberment. In consequence she will look with favour upon the strengthening of the political, cultural, and economic links which unite the different portions of Syria. To this end, the Delegate-General and Plenipotentiary of Free France will revise the texts defining the particular status formerly accorded to certain regions, in such a way that, while the administrative and financial autonomy to which they show themselves firmly attached is preserved, they shall be politically subordinated to the Syrian central power. Thus the principle of Syrian unity and the particular aspirations of these regions will be reconciled.

It remains understood, moreover, that the guarantees of public right set out in the organic statutes in favour of individuals and of communities will be maintained and given full effect.¹

In accordance with these principles, the two autonomous territories were re-attached to the rest of Syria. Thus, the first Government formed after the proclamation contained a Druze and an Alawi Minister ; and in February 1942, the two provinces were once more formally annexed to Syria, with provisions for a special administrative and financial regime. In September 1944 the Administrative Council of Jebel Druze voted unanimously for the abrogation of its special regime and complete incorporation in the Syrian State.

In the summer of 1943, elections were held and subsequently a nationalist government took office. As formerly, the Chamber contained representatives of the minorities and the Cabinet a Christian minister. The Government made clear its intention of treating all members of the community on a footing of complete

¹ General Catroux's Proclamation of Syrian Independence, September 28, 1941. *Journal Officiel de la France Libre* (London), Première année, No. 13, December 9, 1941.

equality but, at the same time, of making its authority respected by all alike. In spite of these declarations, however, there were a series of petty incidents in 1944 which aroused the fears of some of the minorities : for example, local disorders and alleged injustices in government appointments. In some parts of the country, moreover, the Government had difficulty in imposing its authority. This was particularly true of the Alawi district, where Suleiman Murshid and his associates caused trouble ; the Jazirah also was not quiet. There were a number of reasons for these difficulties : it was inevitable that the minorities should still retain their old fears of Sunni domination ; it was no less natural that in a time of administrative changes certain local officials should abuse their powers and indulge their prejudices ; it was unavoidable that families and groups should be disappointed when official appointments were made, and should blame the Government's choice on religious prejudice. None of these, however, was the most important reason. That was to be found in the strained state of relations between the French and the nationalists in Syria. So long as France continued to deny the claim of the nationalists to full independence, they could not help feeling a certain resentment against the minorities who had so often been used as tools of French policy.

In 1945, after the Franco-Syrian crisis in the course of which Damascus was bombarded, Franco-Syrian political relations were at last regulated, and agreement was reached for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Syrian soil. The withdrawal took place in 1946, and thus the essential condition for the establishment of normal relations between majority and minorities was fulfilled.

Chapter Eleven

IRAQ

Distribution of Minorities

THERE are no complete and up-to-date statistics of the population of Iraq, and estimates of the size of the minorities must therefore be treated with caution. The following figures have been arrived at by a comparison of several estimates, but are no more than rough approximations :

Kurds	800,000
Turcomans	75,000
Persians	80,000
Assyrians	30,000
Other Christians	60,000
Jews	100,000
Yazidis	30,000
Mandacans	3,000
Shabak	12,000
Total	about 1,200,000
Total population	aboLit 4,500,000

These figures show that the minorities between them form about a quarter of the population of Iraq. Of the minority-population itself three-quarters consist of groups which differ from the majority not in religion but in race and language. The minority-problem is much more one of relations between Arabs and non-Arabs than in the other countries.

The greater part of the minorities inhabit the north of the country. Almost all the Kurds dwell in the mountainous north and north-east, in which they constitute a majority. The Yazidis are a compact community in Jebel Sinjar in the north-west ; the Assyrians dwell largely in the Kurdish mountains and the plains around Mosul, although they are also scattered in other parts of the country. The majority of the other Christians live in and around Mosul, the remainder mostly in Baghdad and Basra. The Turcomans are to be found in a line of towns and villages running roughly south-east from Mosul in the border-districts between the predominantly Kurdish and predominantly Arab parts of the country ; their main centre is Kirkuk. The Shabak live on the banks of the Tigris, south of Mosul.

Most of the Persians live in the Shi'i Holy Cities of Nejf,

Kerbela, Samarra and Kadhimain. Two-thirds of the Jews inhabit Baghdad, the others living mainly in Mosul and Basra. The Mandaeans dwell on the banks of rivers in Southern Iraq.

Written Guarantees

In 1932 the Council of the League of Nations gave its approval to the termination of the Mandatory regime and decided to admit Iraq to membership of the League on condition that the Iraqi Government gave formal guarantees for, among other things, the effective protection of minorities, containing the same general provisions as the minority-treaties accepted by several European States and any special provisions which the Council might think necessary.

In accordance with this decision the Iraqi Government issued a declaration, Chapter I of which safeguarded the rights of indigenous minorities. They were guaranteed full protection of life and liberty ; the free exercise of any creed, religion or belief; equality before the law and of civil and political rights ; freedom in the use of any language ; the right to maintain their own institutions and educational establishments and to have questions of personal status settled in accordance with their customs and usages ; full protection for the religious establishments of religious minorities and the right to administer their own endowments; and an adequate share for minorities in public funds for educational, religious and charitable purposes. These stipulations were recognized as fundamental laws of Iraq and were declared to constitute obligations of international concern and to be placed under the guarantee of the League of Nations.

Even before the issue of this declaration, the Iraqi Constitution, promulgated in 1925, had given similar full guarantees. Article 6 declares the absolute equality of all Iraqis before the law. Article 13 states that Islam is the official religion of the State, but guarantees complete freedom of conscience and worship in conformity with accepted customs, in so far as forms of worship do not conflict with the maintenance of order or public morality. Article 16 gives communities the right of establishing and maintaining schools for the instruction of their members in their own languages; Article 17, however, states that Arabic is the official language except as may be prescribed by a special law. Article 18 provides that government appointments shall be made without

discrimination in accordance with capacity. Finally, Article 37 states that the method of election to the Chamber of Deputies shall take into account the necessity for the representation of non-Islamic minorities.

Some of these guarantees have been reinforced by particular laws. Thus the Electoral Law of 1924 allotted four deputies to the Christians and four to the Jews ; it is a matter for dispute whether the law permits individual Christians and Jews to be elected as representatives of the ordinary constituencies. Similarly the non-Moslem communities were given representation in local and municipal councils by special laws.

As for the linguistic minorities, the Local Languages Law of 1931 provided that the official language should be Kurdish or Turkish in a number of districts, and in addition that in all elementary and primary schools in those districts the language of instruction should be the mother-tongue of the majority of the pupils.

Personal Status and Communal Organization

The grant to religious minorities of jurisdiction in personal and other matters has not met with the same difficulties as those which have occurred in Syria. Articles 75 and 78 of the Constitution provided for the establishment of Christian and Jewish Spiritual Councils, with powers of jurisdiction to be conferred upon them by special laws. Their functions were defined in Article 79 as including matters relating to marriage, dowry, divorce, separation, alimony, attestation of wills and any other matters relating to personal status if the parties concerned consented. Every religious community was also, according to Article 112, to have the right to establish bodies competent to administer Waqf property.

In application of these provisions, several laws have been issued for particular communities, defining the method of appointment of the spiritual heads of the communities and of their councils, both spiritual and lay, and their functions in regard not only to personal status but also the decision of religious questions, the training of ecclesiastics, the administration of Waqf property, and the administration of schools and charitable institutions. For those communities for which special laws have not yet been issued, the old Turkish law on the subject remains valid.

The Minorities and the Iraqi State

The Iraqi Government has on the whole tried to be correct in its dealings with the minorities. There are usually one or two Kurds in each Cabinet and there have been one Jewish and one Christian Minister ; the minorities have a share, although perhaps an inadequate one, in government and army appointments, and in government subsidies to schools. Apart from the Assyrian incidents of 1933, the peculiar circumstances of which are explained below, and the Baghdad pogrom of 1941, at a time when government had practically ceased to function, there has been no physical persecution of minorities. Nevertheless, they are all restless and apprehensive, and have not yet come to regard themselves, nor are they regarded by others, as full and loyal citizens of the Iraqi State.

The explanation for this is not to be found in the bad will either of majority or of minorities. Its fundamental cause is to be looked for in the amorphous nature of the State. Iraq was created artificially by joining together three Ottoman provinces. It is too large to have the natural unity which each of those provinces possesses by itself, too small to have the unity of the Fertile Crescent or Arab Asia as a whole. It has not yet acquired a unity or structure of its own, and cannot do so until two fundamental questions are faced and answered : first, what are to be the relations between Sunnis and Shi'is in Iraq; secondly, what is to be the relation of Iraq to the rest of the Arab world ?

The first is perhaps the most important of all questions for the future of the country. There are more Sunnis than Shi'is in Iraq as a whole, but the Sunnis are divided into Kurds and Arabs, so that the Shi'is form the largest single community. Nevertheless, they have less than their due share in the Government, mainly because there are fewer men of education among them than among the Sunnis. Thus they are discontented, and the political balance between them and the Sunnis is very precarious.

There are to-day two political tendencies in Iraq, based upon two possible solutions of this fundamental problem. Many Iraqis, mainly among the Sunni Arabs, advocate the incorporation of Iraq into an Arab State or federation, in the hope that this will ease the local situation : the Shi'is will be in a minority in the large Arab State, and in course of time will come to look upon themselves as Arabs rather than as Shi'is. The other tendency, which has many adherents among the Shi'is, is towards the

development of an Iraqi nationalism, regarding all Iraqis without distinction as equal citizens of the State.

These two tendencies are not necessarily opposed to one another except in their extreme forms. A Pan-Arab would generally concede the value of local feeling provided it is kept in its proper place ; an Iraqi nationalist would not oppose Iraq's membership of the Arab League. They differ not in essence so much as in emphasis. This difference, however, is important; and it is clear that the future of the minorities will be greatly affected by which of them prevails. If the exclusive Iraqi nationalism prevails, the way will be open for all minorities to become full citizens, although this will not save them from the necessity of at least some degree of assimilation. If Pan-Arab sentiment prevails, then a serious Kurdish problem may arise ; and a Christian problem as well if Pan-Arabism is not dissociated from Islamic feeling.

The Kurds : Description

The Kurds form a compact community with a local majority in the north and north-east of Iraq. Most of them are concentrated in the liwas of Mosul, Irbil, Kirkuk, Sulaimania and Diala. The regions which they inhabit are largely mountainous, and a great proportion of them are nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoral tribesmen, pasturing sheep, goats and other animals, moving up the mountains in the summer and down again in the cool weather. Others of them, however, are farmers in the plains and valleys, who cultivate wheat, fruit, rice and tobacco ; not all the farmers however are wholly settled, some of them being semi-sedentary.

Most of the Kurds are Sunni Moslems, although a minority belong to extreme Shi'i sects. Again, most of them preserve their Kurdish language and customs, although in certain districts they are bi-lingual and a few tribes are in process of being Arabized. Their language is not unified so much as a group of dialects, some of which differ partly from one another. Similarly, they themselves do not form a single community but a group of tribes. Among the wholly settled Kurds the tribal organization is becoming weaker, but in the mountains it is still very strong, and in general it is true to say that tribal loyalty is stronger than any other. The tribesmen, like most mountain peoples, are restless under civil government and positive law. They willingly

acknowledge no law except their own customs, and no leadership except that of their chief families, some of which, like the Baban family, were virtually independent princes in Ottoman days.

Tribal feeling is still, as it has always been, stronger than Kurdish national feeling; and the Kurds have never formed a nation, still less a nation-state. In the last generation or so, however, new factors of unity have been arising. One is the growth of a Kurdish town-population. In the past the Kurds tended to leave commercial crafts to Jews and Christians, but now a Kurdish bourgeoisie has appeared, in whom tribal loyalties are weaker and national ideals stronger. Another factor is the emergence of a Kurdish intelligentsia. Its education has been mainly non-Kurdish: Turkish in the days of the Ottoman Empire, Arabic and Western in the present generation; in consequence many of the educated Kurds have been assimilated to the Turks or Arabs. The majority, however, have remained Kurds, and have begun to develop a modern Kurdish press and literature, with its centres in Baghdad and Sulaimania. They are in contact with the centres of Kurdish life in Syria, Persia, Turkey and the Armenian Soviet Republic, and are forming and spreading the ideas of Kurdish independence and unity.

The Kurds under the Mandate

Before the war of 1914-18, the majority of the Kurds were subject to Ottoman rule. It was natural, therefore, that the Allies should favour the idea of Kurdish autonomy: an ideal embodied in the Treaty of Sèvres (1920), which provided for local autonomy for the Kurds still to be left in Turkey, or, if they themselves desired it, an independent state to include the Kurds of the Mosul Vilayet, of which the disposal was still undecided. The Treaty was never carried out, and was replaced in 1923 by that of Lausanne, which said nothing about a Kurdish State or about autonomy for Turkish Kurdistan. In the meantime, an Iraqi Government under British Mandate had been established, and, as it had been found impossible for economic and other reasons to establish a separate government for the Kurds of the Mosul Vilayet, it had been decided to incorporate them in the unitary State of Iraq. On the whole, the Kurds of the Mosul, Irbil and Kirkuk regions accepted this, but those of Sulaimania did not. In 1922 they revolted under the leadership of Shaikh Mahmud. The revolt was only with difficulty suppressed; and it was not

until 1924 that the Iraqi Government was able to establish its authority in Sulaimania.

In the next year the Frontier Commission, which had been appointed by the Council of the League of Nations to decide upon the disposal of the Mosul Vilayet and the frontier between Iraq and Turkey, visited the Kurdish areas in the Vilayet. In its report it is recommended that, while the Vilayet should be allotted to Iraq, so far as possible the officials of administration, justice and education in the Kurdish areas should be Kurds, and Kurdish should be recognized as an official language. This recommendation was adopted by the League Council, which stated, in its decision on the Mosul issue, that

the British Government, as mandatory Power, is invited to lay before the Council the administrative measures which will be taken with a view to securing for the Kurdish populations . . . the guarantees regarding local administration recommended by the Commission. . . .¹

There can be no doubt that both the mandatory authorities and the Iraqi Government did on the whole carry out the recommendation of the League Commission. But administrative concessions did not satisfy the Kurds, or at least those of the Sulaimania region. It was not only that they had been promised autonomy by the Treaty of Sèvres and deprived of their hope by the Treaty of Lausanne ; even more important was it that they interpreted the recommendation of the Commission as promising them not simply administrative conveniences but also some sort of regional autonomy, and this misunderstanding was never removed. Their discontent found its expression in another revolt, again led by Shaikh Mahmud, in 1927. It was increased by the unfriendly policy towards their fellow-nationals pursued by the Governments of Turkey and Iran, and more especially by the signature of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930, which contained no safeguards for minorities. Quite apart from the dislike of most Kurds for most Arabs, the former could not view with any pleasure the prospect of their being subjected to a Government which was likely to be similar in spirit to those of Turkey and Iran.

Efforts were made to dispel these fears. On the one hand,

¹ Decision Relating to Turco-Iraq Frontier. Adopted by the Council of the League of Nations, Geneva, December 16, 1925. H.M. Stationery Office, Misc. 17. Cmd. 2562, 1925.

the Acting High Commissioner and the Acting Prime Minister visited Kurdistan together, and made statements in which, while condemning separation and emphasizing the unity of Iraq, they spoke of the Government's resolve to satisfy the linguistic and other demands of the Kurds. On the other hand, a number of conciliatory measures, both legislative and administrative, were taken. The most important of them was the Local Languages Law already mentioned.

In spite of this, revolt once more broke out among the Kurds, first under Shaikh Mahmud (1930-1) and then under Shaikh Ahmad of Barzan (1932). The causes of these revolts were partly political and partly personal. They were only subdued through the intervention of the R.A.F.

The Kurds since the Treaty

From 1932 to 1943 the Kurds did not revolt again, but continued to be restless and unwilling to accept the authority of the Government. There were two main reasons for their restlessness. The first was the growth of Kurdish national spirit, due partly to the gradual appearance of a class of educated Kurds, partly to a natural reaction against Pan-Arabism. The encouragement given by the French to Kurdish nationalism in the Syrian Jazirah, and by the Russians to Kurdish autonomy in the Caucasus, may also have had a certain although a limited influence. The second and more fundamental reason was to be found in the particular administrative grievances of the Kurdish tribes. The Iraqi Government made little attempt to carry out the provisions of the various laws passed during the mandatory period. Government departments in Baghdad tended to neglect the claims of districts so far away from the capital; and the Kurds had no way of making their voice heard effectively and compelling the Government to pay attention to their needs. In general, Arab officials in the northern provinces failed to understand the mentality and needs of the Kurdish people (although Kurdish officials in Arab districts were often highly successful). The gap between administration and inhabitants was perhaps greatest in the Mosul liwa, where the administration was largely under the influence of the Arab townspeople of Mosul itself.

The Government's neglect showed itself in every sphere. There were few facilities for education, and those which existed were mainly for education in Arabic. Again, nothing was done

to extend and improve the cultivation of the land and raise the standard of living. This had serious consequences when the war came and brought with it urgent economic problems. The mountain districts did not produce enough cereals to feed the population, and importation on an adequate scale was rendered difficult by the poverty of the Kurdish peasants, the lack of a food-supply organization and the insufficiency of transport. The sense of grievance was further stimulated by the example of the Kurds in Persia, who had thrown off the authority of the Persian Government since the Allied occupation of 1941. In 1943 Mulla Mustafa, the brother of Shaikh Ahmad, rose in revolt in the Barzan district. His rising lasted for several months. Attempts to suppress it failed and it was finally called off after negotiations, and an undertaking by the Government to look into Kurdish grievances. Majid Mustafa himself a Kurd and a distinguished administrator, was appointed Minister without Portfolio with the special duty of devoting himself to Kurdish affairs. His report outlined a scheme of economic and administrative reforms. In the course of 1944 little was done to carry out these or any reforms, and Mulla Mustafa's movement still smouldered ; the condition of the Kurds was somewhat improved, however, by the increased cultivation of tobacco, their most important cash-crop.

The Assyrians

The Assyrians form a distinct community, not only by reason of their Nestorian faith, but also through their language, a Syriac dialect, and their traditions. They are probably the descendants of tribes which moved from the plains of Iraq into the mountains to the north during the period of the Mongol invasion, and remained there until the present generation. In their mountain-home they lived as shepherds, feudally organized under their *maliks* with their Patriarch, the Mar Shimun, as their temporal as well as spiritual ruler. They paid a yearly tribute to the Ottoman Sultan, but were in practice autonomous, although their autonomy was always subject to interference by their neighbours the Kurds.

At the beginning of the First World War they were divided into three main groups : first, the mountaineers in the Hakkari district of what is now Turkey ; secondly, those in the plains to the west of Lake Urmiah, in Persia; and, thirdly those in the

lowlands to the south of Hakkari, in what is now Iraq. When the war broke out, the Hakkari group revolted against the Turks, largely in the hope of Russian help. Driven from their homes, they joined up with their fellow-countrymen and with the Russians around Urmiah; but the collapse of Russia destroyed their position, and after resisting the Turks for a time, they were forced to flee southwards to Hamadan, where the British military authorities disarmed them and sent them on to the refugee camp at Baqubah near Baghdad.

When the war ended, the problem arose of what to do with the refugees on Baqubah. In 1919 there were some 25,000 of them; most of them were from the Hakkari group and wanted nothing except to be allowed to return to their native mountains. This, which would have been possible immediately after the war, became impossible when in 1925 the Council of the League of Nations settled the question of the Turco-Iraqi frontier in a way which left the Hakkari region inside Turkey. Thus, the land which the Assyrian refugees regarded as theirs was placed on one side of the frontier while they themselves were on the other; and since the Turkish Government refused to allow them to return, and deported such of them as had returned, the mandatory and Iraqi authorities were left with the problem of finding new homes for them.

By 1930 a great deal had been done to solve the problem. Some thousands had been settled in villages in the northern district of the country (this in addition to those who had returned to their homes to the south of the Hakkari mountains, and whose position was unaffected by subsequent disturbances). In addition, several thousands had found work in Mosul, Baghdad and other towns. Only a few hundreds still remained unsettled. All this work had been helped by the privileges granted to the refugees by the Iraqi Government and the interest taken in them by the mandatory Power, which had special obligations towards them because of what they had suffered for the Allied cause during the war.

Nevertheless, the Assyrians were not contented with their position. Their discontent was partly due to the general unrest and demoralization which their experiences in the war and as refugees living on charity had implanted in them. But it was also due to more particular causes. First, there was their continuing desire to return to their own country, and their refusal

to accept their stay in Iraq as more than temporary. Secondly; even if they had to remain in Iraq, they wished to go on living the same sort of independent life under the Mar Shimuh as they had lived before the war. They were not satisfied with the privileges which they shared with other minorities ; they claimed complete autonomy, and their claims were expressed in the most intransigent form by the Mar Shimun himself. Finally, they distrusted the Iraqi Government, and regarded themselves as in a special way the protégés of the British Government; when the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 was signed, they thought themselves to have been abandoned by their protectors, and feared the worst. Their fears were intensified by the work among them of a small group of agitators.

Nor was the Iraqi Government more satisfied with the situation. It resented the special position accorded to the Assyrians, no less than the refusal of the Assyrians to be contented with their position as citizens of Iraq. What is more important, it feared them. Throughout the mandatory period, Assyrian Levies had been trained and used by the British authorities for guarding aerodromes as well as for the repression of the Kurdish revolts. They had proved to be good soldiers ; both they and the Iraqis believed that they would be more than a match for the young Iraqi Army. After 1930 they were gradually disbanded, but they retained their arms, and the Iraqi Government feared that in view of the prevailing discontent among the Assyrians they might revolt and the revolt would be difficult to crush; it feared also that the British Government might instigate a revolt, as an excuse for recovering control over the country.

By the summer of 1933 tension between the Assyrians and the Government was very great. Although some of the former were willing to come to terms with the Government, others, the foremost among them being the Mar Shimun, were still demanding autonomy ; and asked, if this was not possible, to be allowed to cross the frontier into Syria. Relations between the Mar Shimun and the Government had reached such a state that he was not allowed to return from Baghdad to the north. The Government and the Army were becoming increasingly frightened of the possibility of a revolt, and resolved, if given an opportunity, to end the danger once and for all. King Feisal and several of the more experienced Ministers were away in Europe, and the

Ministers left in Iraq were too weak or disinclined to resist the extremism of the Army and of public opinion.

At this moment, in June, a group of Assyrians decided to take matters into their own hands and cross the Tigris into Syria. On the other side of the river they were disarmed by the French authorities ; but later their arms were returned to them and many of them crossed back into Iraq. There they met a detachment of the Iraqi Army ; fighting broke out (it cannot be established who began it), and both sides suffered casualties. When the news of this incident spread through Iraq, Government, Army and public alike were seized with mass hysteria ; the action of the Assyrians was considered as the beginning of a revolt, and it was resolved to take decisive action. The Army organized and carried out a series of massacres in which some hundreds of Assyrians were killed.

These massacres, and the fear of further ones, completely broke the spirit of the Assyrians. Some 6,000 of them crossed over into the Upper Khabur region in Syria, and about 15,000 others subsequently expressed their desire to leave Iraq. The Council of the League of Nations set up a special committee to deal with the question of settling them. After several proposals for their settlement in Brazil, in British Guiana and in the Orontes Valley in Syria had been considered and rejected, it was finally decided that those already in Syria should be permanently settled in the Upper Khabur Valley in the Jazirah, while the remainder should stay in Iraq.

The situation of the Assyrians in the Khabur Settlement has already been discussed. Of those who remained in Iraq or have returned to it, some are still in their old homes round Amadia and Ruwanduz ; some have settled down again in villages around Mosul ; others are working in the big towns. A British Commission appointed by the Iraqi Government reported in 1938 that their economic position in the northern plains was at least as good as that of the other inhabitants. No further incidents have occurred ; the Assyrians are no longer disposed to be intransigent, and the Government is no longer obsessed by the idea that they are dangerous. It is not impossible, however, that a dangerous situation will once more arise. During the recent war a very large proportion of the Assyrian men were enrolled in the R.A.F. levies or were working for Great Britain in other ways. It was calculated that 75 per cent of them were

economically dependent on the British. Quite apart from the economic dangers of this, there were signs that they once more hoped for autonomy under British protection. The danger of such hopes is too obvious to need explanation.

The Other Christians

Apart from the Assyrians, the Christians in Iraq are mainly Chaldaeans, Syrian Orthodox and Catholics, and Armenian Orthodox and Catholics, with smaller numbers of Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics and other Uniates, and Protestants. The communities are recognized by the Government as possessing competence in matters of personal status and other internal affairs.

Here, as in the other countries, the Christians are more fully an urban community than the Moslems, and show a peculiar aptitude for commerce, crafts and the professions ; but there is also a large peasant community, Chaldaean, Syrian Orthodox and Syrian Catholic, in the plains around Mosul. In Iraq, as elsewhere, the proportion of educated Christians is higher than that of educated Moslems, and they are further advanced on the road to Westernization, thanks to the work of foreign missions and schools.

The Armenians are a trading community in the towns. They preserve their language and traditions carefully, but they are too few to be able to avoid some measure of external assimilation. The other Christians are partly Syriac-speaking, partly Arabic. This cannot, however, be regarded as a sharp distinction, since the language used depends upon the environment in which they are living, and many of them are bi-lingual. In general, it is true that those whose native language is now Arabic spoke Syriac until recent generations, and that with few exceptions they are not conscious of belonging to the Arab nation.

In spite of efforts to spread the conception of a ' Syriac ' people, the general tendency among the Christians is towards at least a superficial Arabization. This raises the question of their relation towards the Arab nationalist movement. So far, they have regarded it with fear and hostility, apart from some individuals who have supported it with enthusiasm. The nationalists too have tended to suspect them, although the existence of the much greater Kurdish and Shi'i problems has diverted attention from them. What the future relationship will be depends very

largely on the line of development which the nationalist movement takes.

The Jews

The organization of the Jewish community is regulated by a law passed in 1931, which laid down the composition and functions of the various institutions of the three communities of Baghdad, Mosul and Basra. (A fourth community, that of Diala, was added in 1932.) Through these institutions the communities possess self-government in their own affairs.

The majority of Jews in Iraq are Arabic-speaking and belong to families which have been settled in the country for hundreds or even thousands of years. They live mainly in the large towns, in the economic life of which they have a large part. They are manufacturers, merchants, financiers, and follow the free professions. Their influence is particularly great in Baghdad. In the north of the country Kurdish-speaking Jews are to be found; they are mainly traders and craftsmen in the Kurdish towns, but a number of Jewish agricultural villages exist in the Amadia district.

Their communal life is highly organized. There is a large number of Jewish schools, some of them subsidized by the Government, and many of them reaching a comparatively high standard. There is a class of highly cultivated and Westernized Jews.

There is no open and official discrimination against them. Individual Jews are to be found in Parliament, the Civil Service and the Army; the first and greatest Minister of Finance, Sassoon Heskail, was a Jew. There is, however, a considerable hostility towards them, because of traditional religious hatred and their economic power. This has increased greatly in recent years as a natural consequence of Arab opposition to Zionism. It is true that the Iraqi Jews, like the Oriental Jews, are for the most part not Zionists by conviction; some of them indeed profess to be Arab nationalists and are hostile to Zionism. It is inevitable, however, that some of the hostility which Arabs feel for Jewish designs on Palestine should be directed to the Jews in their midst. The growing hostility showed itself most clearly in the incidents which followed the collapse of Rashid Ali's movement in Baghdad in 1941. In the past few years, many Iraqi Jews, aware that their future in Iraq is dark, have emigrated to Palestine and America in search of greater security or opportunity.

Other Minorities

Of the other minorities, the Turcomans, Mandaeans and Shabak raise no problems. There have been occasional movements of unrest among the Yazidis and they have more than once come into conflict with the authorities ; a punitive expedition was sent against them during the period of Bekr Sidqi. Like the Assyrians, they are a community with a tradition of autonomy in Ottoman days, and it has proved difficult to reconcile them to becoming citizens of a modern centralized State ; they need above all tactful and enlightened local administration.

Chapter Twelve

CHANGES DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Political Tendencies

IT is too early yet to say what effect the recent war has had upon the problem of minorities ; it is possible only to refer briefly to certain tendencies which have appeared or grown in strength during the last few years, without predicting to what extent they will be of lasting importance.

There has been a considerable development in the movement for Arab unity, which has found expression in the establishment of the League of Arab States at the conferences of Alexandria (September to October 1944) and Cairo (March 1945). Besides this the Arab States have achieved full equality in the world community, have become members of the United Nations and are taking an increasing part in the work of various international organizations.

A number of factors have strengthened the Islamic movement, particularly in Egypt, where it is organized in the * Ikhwan Al-Muslimin ', a group which already possesses a considerable hold on certain classes and may play a decisive part in the political history of the immediate post-war years. In the other countries, however, this tendency is not organized and is probably much less strong ; and even in Egypt it is not certain that it is more than an ephemeral tendency. Its future, and more generally the form which the Arab and Egyptian movements are going to take, depends upon a large number of factors, both internal and external, which have not yet clearly revealed themselves.

The Collapse of France

The collapse of France in 1940 had a profound effect upon the spirits of many Christians and Jews. It was not only that those Syrian and Lebanese Christians who had for so long relied upon the protection and favour of France found themselves face to face with new possibilities : as for instance the possibility that in future they would have to live unprotected with their Moslem fellow-countrymen, and incur the consequences of having allowed themselves to be used as an instrument of Western aggression.

What was more important was the fact that many Christians and Jews who had taken the French language and culture for their own and regarded France as their spiritual home found suddenly that the whole basis of their life had collapsed. It is too early to say what the consequences of this will be, and whether they will be more than transient; but it has made it temporarily more difficult for the minorities to console themselves for their position by regarding themselves as citizens of a spiritual community far richer and more universal than that from which they are shut out.

The Rise of Russia

With another section of the minorities, the decline of France has been more than overshadowed by the revelation of Russian strength and the enormous increase of the name and influence of the U.S.S.R. in the world. The Greek Orthodox, who never completely lost their love for Russia, have begun once more to look to her for support and protection. The Armenians and Kurds have drawn renewed hope from the good treatment of their countrymen in the Caucasus; many of the Armenians in particular hope to emigrate to the Armenian S.S.R. now that the war is over.

In the past two years there has been a noticeable increase in Russian attention to the Arab countries, which cannot fail to have important effects on the position of the minorities. At the very least, the Russian example of complete racial and religious toleration and of a common ideal in the service of which differences must be forgotten will have its devotees. It is also possible that direct relations will be established with various minorities: the grant of freedom of foreign policy and representation to the constituent Republics may be a step in this direction.

Allied Promises

On the whole, the Allies avoided making specific promises to particular communities (although the enrolment of the Assyrians in the Iraqi levies may be regarded by them as imposing upon Great Britain special obligations towards them). Their caution in this respect was, however, offset by the effect which the Atlantic Charter had on all communities. In the absence of any authoritative interpretation of the exact meaning of the Charter, discontented communities tended to regard it as a support for

their particular claims; and even those who did not believe in it used it as a propaganda point.

The Sense of Change

Above all, the changes and the unforeseen happenings of war have left people with a sense that anything may happen, that what seemed fixed and unalterable in the past may alter, that questions which seemed decided may be opened again, that things may take a turn either for the worse or for the better.

Chapter Thirteen

CONCLUSIONS—(i)

The Immediate Problem

THE problem of minorities in its present form springs from the fact that majority and minorities do not fully form a community with one another. This is largely a result of the hold which memories of the unhappy past still have over people's minds. Majority and minorities alike still remember the long period of unchallenged Moslem domination, then the intervention of Europe in the nineteenth century, the use which European Powers made of minorities and the ways in which the Ottoman Government reacted. More fundamentally, people are still held back by historic memories and traditional loyalties from entering the new world of thought and action towards which events are driving them. As a consequence, everything is disturbed and transitional in Arab life and society. Nationalism is still entangled with religious conceptions. Social customs are still only half-westernized, although (and this increases the complexity) certain of the minorities are further on the road to Westernization than the majority. The effort to build up modern governments and administrations is still far from reaching its end : the consequence is a general instability of political life, of which the unsatisfactory relationship between governments and minorities is only a particular aspect.

Thus the present phase of the problem arises from the persistence of traditional suspicions and resentments and of sectarian loyalties; the entanglement of nationalism with religion; the differing social customs of different sections of the population ; and the pervasive instability of administrative and political life.

Two questions must be dealt with. The first is : given the existence of these factors, what can be done to make it possible for the minorities to lead a normal and healthy life ? The second, what can be done to remove these factors and create a **political**, social and intellectual life in which the problem will cease to be important ? For the sake of convenience in exposition **the two questions will be treated separately : the first in this chapter and**

the second in the next. But it is clear that the distinction between them is for the sake of analysis only, and that in practice a solution must be sought along both lines of advance simultaneously.

Essential Guarantees for Minorities

What are the essential safeguards which must be given to minorities if their life is to be bearable? (i) First, of course, they must be protected from the threat of physical persecution. In none of the countries dealt with is this likely at the moment to occur, (ii) For religious minorities the most precious possession is freedom of conscience in the widest sense: not only freedom to believe and worship as they please, but also to apply the tenets of their religion in their personal and social life, to have their own law of personal status and their communal organization. In particular, there are two rights which are forbidden by Moslem law but which are essential: the right of inter-marriage (a non-Moslem man cannot marry a Moslem woman, although a Moslem man can marry a non-Moslem woman), and the right of conversion (at present a Moslem cannot leave his religion for another), (iii) For all minorities alike it is essential that their elementary civil and political rights should be guaranteed: or to express it more accurately, their civil and political equality with the majority. They should have equal protection by government and law-courts against injustice and discrimination; equal opportunities of education and employment; and a fair participation in administration and in political life, (iv) Minorities which differ from the majority in language and culture should have the right to conduct their own schools, provided of course they conform to the general regulations of the Government in regard to education and are not used to inculcate a spirit of hostility to the majority or the State. Similarly religious minorities should be entitled to make provision for education in accordance with the tenets and spirit of their religion, (v) It is sometimes forgotten by those who discuss this subject that majorities also have rights and are entitled to expect something from the minorities: in other words, the grant of rights to minorities involves the performance of duties by them. They have the elementary civil and political duties of all citizens; in addition, if (as with all these countries) they are citizens of States which possess a distinctive national consciousness, they have a duty to act so far as possible as members of the nation, or at least

not to obstruct the national will. It is therefore of extreme importance that, whatever method is adopted to guarantee the rights of minorities, it should not be such as to enable or encourage them to refuse the performance of their duties to the State and the nation.

Foreign Rule

So long as the Arab countries were under direct or indirect European rule, the problem was a simple one. Whatever the other defects of their policy in regard to minorities, both Great Britain and France effectively prevented any serious discrimination against them. Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Transjordan have now practically complete self-government. Only Palestine is likely to remain under foreign or international control for some time to come, but even in Palestine a national government may be established sooner or later.

International Guarantees

Failing foreign rule, it is possible to provide for a certain supervision by a foreign Power or group of Powers by means of some sort of formal guarantee. This may take the form of a guarantee given to the minorities by a foreign Power, a group of Powers or an international authority ; or else it may take the form of an undertaking given to such an international authority by the governments of the countries in which the minorities live. This was the method adopted after the First World War, in the minority treaties signed by the new States of Eastern Europe and the declaration made by Iraq on the occasion of its entry into the League of Nations.

The mere existence of such guarantees may have a certain efficacy. They may impress upon the majority the importance of treating the minorities well, by making them realize that their actions in this matter are being watched by foreign governments and world opinion. But they may also humiliate the governments and nations which are obliged to give them, by implying that their good intentions are not trusted. This was one of the grievances of the States which signed minority treaties after the First World War ; they asked why they had to sign such treaties while other States with no better records were left unrestricted. Thus it would be best if any international guarantees were universal, and implied no particular distrust of certain States.

If guarantees are to be effective, some sort of machinery must be established to ensure that they are fulfilled. This machinery, like the guarantees themselves, may take any of several different forms. It may take the form of an international organization to which appeal could be made by individuals or groups who believed that the guarantees had not been properly fulfilled in their regard : this organization could be either judicial, like the Permanent Court of International Justice, or political like the ' Committee of Three' of the League of Nations. Such machinery would only be effective by itself if the governments of the Arab countries, or the dominant political elements, had so great a respect for international order as such or for world-opinion that they would be willing to carry out the decisions of the judicial or political authority. This condition may be fulfilled when what is in question is a matter of unofficial discrimination or of local tyranny by subordinate officials, or when it springs from a relatively minor trend of government policy. But when it is a matter of major policy or what the Government conceives to be national interest, it is unlikely in the present state of public morality that the Government will spontaneously obey the decision of an international body.

In such cases, other forms of control may be suggested. One of them is *ad hoc* intervention by a foreign Power or group of Powers. This may be either diplomatic or armed intervention, and it may take place either at the discretion of the Power which intervenes, or else at the request of an international authority. Alternatively, provision may be made for permanent supervision by a foreign Power or group of Powers : either by means of the maintenance of armed forces on the soil of the country concerned, or through ordinary or special diplomatic agents.

Whichever means is adopted certain things are clear. The first is that armed intervention is not a method which can be used frequently and as a matter of course ; it can only be used or even threatened as a last resort. The second is that it would, in the long run, be fatal for the minorities if the Power or Powers which had the duty of protecting them either directly or through its membership of international bodies, was believed to be using them as a means of advancing its own ends in the country concerned. Nothing would be so likely to draw upon the minorities the evils it is desired to avoid.

Constitutional Guarantees

Another form of guarantee is that which is given by the Government in the constitution or organic law by which it rules, or in specific laws. All the countries dealt with in this study possess constitutions in which the rights of individuals and groups are fully guaranteed.

Such guarantees possess a certain efficacy in themselves. The mere fact of their being solemnly given helps to create certain ideas in people's minds, certain standards of public morality, especially among a people with respect for law or tradition. They may be reinforced by the provision of machinery for seeing that they are fulfilled. For example, the grant of special representation for the minorities in Parliament and Ministry may ensure that the grievances of the minorities are heard, although it may be harmful in other ways by emphasizing the distinctiveness of the minorities and helping to perpetuate their particularist spirit. Again, a judicial body independent of the Government may be appointed to investigate the grievances of the minorities, and discover and redress infringements of the guarantees. Such a body existed in Polish Silesia between the two wars and was successful on the whole. This is not surprising, since in normal times most of the grievances of the minorities arise not from deliberate attacks upon them by the Government but from particular acts of officials which may in ordinary circumstances not come to the notice of the central Government.

Should a major issue arise between Government and minorities, no machinery of this sort is likely to be effective. In such circumstances the only safeguard for the observance of the constitution is to be found in the Government's respect for legality as such or in control exercised by an enlightened public opinion ; neither of these is likely to be effective at the present time.

The Millet System

Apart from formal guarantees, which are applicable to all minorities, various other measures may be adopted for the protection of particular types of minority. For 'scattered' religious minorities, the preservation and even the extension of the *millet* system is a possible line of policy. Its essence consists, first, in the treatment of the minority as a single community organized under its spiritual heads, and, secondly, in the Government's delegating to the community responsibility for certain matters

which intimately concern it. The strength of this system in the past, and its weakness in the present, is that it is based upon a theocratic conception of life : upon the ordinary man's regarding his membership of a particular religious community as the most important fact about himself, and his willingness to accept the rulings of the spiritual authorities over a wide range of matters. For good or ill, this conception seems to be passing away in the East as in the West. Many are indifferent or even hostile to religion; many of those who still cling to religious beliefs are impatient of ecclesiastical authority.

Moreover, the modern States which are arising in the Arab world cannot be indifferent to as wide a range of matters as was the Ottoman State. They rest upon the assumption of the existence of, or the possibility of creating, a sense of common nationhood, of collective responsibility, among as many as possible of their citizens. This necessitates, for example, that the education of the minorities, even if it is carried on in their special language and their own schools, should include instruction in the language of the majority and should not be fundamentally different in spirit from that of the majority : also that inter-marriage should be made possible, if not encouraged ; and, more generally, that men should place their loyalty to the State above loyalty to their sect and their spiritual leaders. All these and other such matters involve a degree of control and interference by the Government which cuts at the root of the *millet* system.

Although the *millet* system, as traditionally conceived, cannot be revived, there are certain relics and adaptations of it which have still a useful part to play. The existing system of personal status tribunals is indispensable, although it needs to be supplemented by civil jurisdiction for those who do not wish to have their affairs regulated by religious laws, and by adequate provision for those who wish to leave their community and join a new one. It might also be profitable to give the existing organized communities the widest possible degree of cultural autonomy.

The Copts

There is no machinery by which the position of the Copts can be guaranteed. The immediately important task is to prevent the union of Copts and Moslems in the nationalist movement **from** being broken. It is perhaps not possible to preserve the

particular form which that union has taken in the last twenty-five years, which is the Wafd ; nor would the replacement of the Wafd by the Ikhwan improve the situation. The only hope lies in the strengthening of that wing of the nationalist movement which dissociates itself from religion and sets itself positive aims of internal construction.

The Druzes and Alawis

The Druze and Alawi regions are now officially incorporated in the Syrian State but the latter still has a special administrative regime, and both still need very capable handling. At present it would be difficult and undesirable to grant them a greater degree of autonomy. The grant of full autonomy has always been opposed by the majority of Syrians, who are afraid that the minorities would not be satisfied with autonomy but would aim at complete independence, and that the autonomous districts would become centres of foreign influence directed to the disruption of the Syrian State. Moreover, very many of the Druzes and Alawis themselves no longer want autonomy, which would condemn them to poverty, backwardness and the domination of great feudal families, and deprive their ambitious and able youth of the possibility of advancement. On the other hand, however, it is not yet possible to treat the two districts in every way as ordinary provinces of Syria, not only because they have special needs and traditions, but also because the effects of twenty years' encouragement of the autonomist spirit cannot be removed in a day. For some time to come, the majority of the officials in these regions will have to be drawn from the regions themselves ; officials from other parts of Syria will have to be very carefully chosen, and both they and the central Government will have to act with the greatest tact and discretion. The aim of this special treatment should be to enable the Druzes and Alawis to draw nearer to the rest of the population, socially and culturally, and to encourage the growth of a spirit of co-operation and trust, although not at the expense of a healthy local patriotism.

The Kurds of Iraq

There can be no doubt that the Kurds in Iraq are better treated than those in Turkey and, until recently, in Iran. They can live as Kurds, using their own language in their homes and in their dealings with the Government. They can become ministers and

deputies, government officials and army officers. There is also no doubt, however, that during the last ten years or so they have been seriously neglected by the Iraqi Government. Little has been done to improve the economic situation in their districts, or to construct an efficient administration; the result has been widespread poverty and distress in the last few years, which produced the revolt of 1943. Few schools have been established, and such civil and military posts as have been given to Kurds have gone rather to Arabized Kurds than to those who are still fully members of the Kurdish community. The first necessity is for this neglect to cease. The Kurdish areas should be treated equally with others in such matters as irrigation and public health; more Kurdish officials should be appointed; and the Kurds should be given full opportunity to express their needs and grievances in Baghdad.

In so far as their unrest arises not from particular grievances but from their desire for autonomy or even independence it is more difficult to see what can be done. An independent Kurdistan does not seem possible at present, if only because Turkey and Iran would scarcely consent to its being created. Kurdish autonomy within the Iraqi State would raise serious problems, in regard not only to relations between the autonomous administration and the central Government but also to relations between the latter and the Governments of the neighbouring countries. The Arabs of Iraq in general would not willingly consent to the grant of autonomy, since they would regard it as the first step in the break-up of the State.

The Problem of Lebanon

The independence of the Lebanese Republic has now been recognized by the States of the Arab and the outer world; the discussion of whether or not Lebanon ought to be independent is therefore irrelevant for the moment, although it may be raised once more in the future. Similarly, the question of the Lebanese frontiers is not urgent at present, since none of the various sections of Lebanese opinion would permit such a change, for reasons which differ from one section to another. This question also, however, may appear again after a time.

For the moment the urgent problem is that of the internal divisions of the country and the consequent instability of its political and administrative life. So long as the Government

continues to be organized on a sectarian basis, the relations between the communities are certain to be strained.

The situation can only be improved, first, by the development of a sense of Lebanese unity and a consciousness of the place of Lebanon as part of the Arab world (the two are not incompatible but complementary to one another); in this way the Lebanese can be raised above the pettiness of sectarianism and of an exclusive localism. At the same time it is essential that other States, whether Arab or Western, should refrain from stirring up conflicts and hatreds among the sects. This does not mean, however, that they should not interest themselves at all in the internal structure of Lebanon. On the contrary, they should make it clear that they are interested in maintaining the character of Lebanon as a centre of religious freedom and the home of a healthy national spirit, free alike from Moslem and Christian fanaticism, although not necessarily cut off from Moslem and Christian belief.

The Jazirah

Even if the Syrian Government were not wholly opposed to the autonomy of the Jazirah, it would be impossible to set up a system of self-government. There is no common tradition among the inhabitants, nor even a common language; and many of them have come too recently into the country to have any roots there or any clear idea of what they want or need. The first necessity is firm, just and well-intentioned government, to enable the inhabitants to settle down in their new homes. The administration should be chosen with the greatest care, and should include as many Kurds and Arab Christians as possible. While jealous of its authority it should not try deliberately to stamp out local differences or loyalties, nor forcibly to Arabize the population; such an attempt would certainly fail and would have unfortunate repercussions in the outer world. One of its most important tasks would be to assist the Beduin to settle on the land, since a region which is occupied both by peasants and by nomads is certain to be unquiet.

The inhabitants for their part should make an effort to learn Arabic and to consider themselves citizens of the Syrian State. This will be more difficult perhaps for the Kurds than for the other inhabitants, because of the growing strength of Kurdish nationalist feeling. But if their essential demand is conceded—

freedom to live as Kurds—they may become less intransigent.

The Armenians and Assyrians

The Armenians and the Assyrians have neither language nor religion in common with the Sunni Arabs. Both are peoples very tenacious of their individuality, embittered by their experiences during the last two generations, and with something of that 'persecution-mania' which is so often a cause no less than a result of persecution. With the Armenians there is the special factor of their having become largely an urban community, although they have a tradition of agriculture.

Both communities constitute so small a proportion of the population among which they live that, given favourable circumstances, there is no reason why they should give rise to a special problem. To bring about these favourable circumstances, it is necessary that everything possible should be done in the way of sympathetic administration and the provision of economic opportunities to modify the abnormal state of mind into which they have been thrown by their experience in the past. It would be desirable, too, that they on their side should learn Arabic (as indeed many of the younger generation are eager to do) and in other ways should reconcile themselves to their situation as minorities.

The majority of the Armenians are now looking to Soviet Armenia where their fellow-countrymen enjoy a degree of individual and national liberty which they have not known in recent generations, and where communal life is more active than for a long period past. Since the end of the war, the Soviet authorities have begun to permit immigration into the Armenian Republic, and it is probable that a very large proportion of the Armenians at present living in Arab countries will choose to return home.

Chapter Fourteen

CONCLUSIONS—(ii)

The Ultimate Solution

IN the long run there is only one way in which the problem of minorities can be solved: majority and minorities must form a 'community' with one another, must learn to respect and trust one another, and on the basis of trust and respect work together for common ends. There must be what M. Maritain has called 'fellowship' between them. This does not mean that the differences between them will completely disappear, for unity does not necessarily imply uniformity; nor does it mean that the minorities cannot retain their own organization and loyalties for certain purposes. It means that both majority and minorities must be conscious that their loyalties and duties do not stop at the limits of their racial or religious group, and that every human community must, if it would avoid falling into mortal sin, make itself the servant of something higher than itself.

The Supra-National State

It is often asserted that the only way of bringing about such a 'fellowship' is through the creation of super-national States, like the Ottoman or Hapsburg Empires. Such a State would be a conglomeration of nations, each on a level of equality with all the rest. Each nation would enjoy autonomy in cultural and certain other matters by a development of the *millet* system, but nationalism would have no relation with the political life of the State.

It is difficult, however, to conceive of such a State being created in the Arab countries in the predictable future. If it is to come into existence and to survive, it can only be at the bidding of a *mystique*, 3. creative idea which is stronger than nationalism in its hold on men's imaginations. In the Ottoman and Hapsburg Empires this *mystique* was a combination of several elements: the force of a common religion conceived to be *the* religion; loyalty to a person and a family; and the awe inspired by the universality of the Empire, whose roots stretched back in time

to unremembered ages and which was regarded not as one State among many but as *the* State.

No force less strong than the combination of these ideas could have held together the Empires for so long; in our day there is perhaps only one force which could create and maintain a similar state—that of apocalyptic Communism. Communism alone has the universality of extension, the supernatural source and sanction which can override human distinctions and hold together diverse communities in a common task.

Short of a Communist revolution in the Arab lands, there does not seem any possibility of creating a supra-national State in the Middle East. It is of course possible and desirable to establish close relations between States and *ad hoc* associations of States for specific purposes; but it is inconceivable that a State should be based on nothing more profound than the desire to obtain certain material benefits or to solve certain problems.

The Development of Nationalism

It may be assumed for the next generation or so that the States with which this study has dealt will continue to be national States; and therefore the development of the problem of minorities will depend very largely on the development of nationalism. There are a number of questions in regard to which Arab and Egyptian nationalism have not yet taken up a definitive attitude.

(i) It is not yet clear whether nationalism is able to provide a sufficient basis for stable government in countries so torn by divisions of every kind. In Egypt the problem of government is comparatively simple, and it is not difficult for a government to maintain a sort of order and unity; but the other countries still lack a ruling-class*, a moral relationship between government and people, a sense of solidarity, an administration strong enough to impose its authority. The problem of authority is particularly great in Palestine and Iraq, which are split from top to bottom by the conflicts of Jew with Arab, and Sunni with Shi'i respectively. So long as government is unstable, all the internal relationships between classes, sections and communities are bound to be unquiet and abnormal. One of the first conditions for the solution of the problem of minorities, therefore, is the solution of the problem of the instability of indigenous governments.

(ii) Nationalism has not yet decided its attitude towards the

Western Powers. This is not its fault, since they have not yet decided their attitude towards it. If nationalism continues to be primarily a movement of defence against and opposition to the Western Powers, it is inevitable that it should regard with suspicion those minorities which share the religious or other characteristics of the West; it is inevitable, too, that some at least of those minorities should be torn between their national and religious loyalties, and that the Western Powers should be tempted to make use of such minorities. If, however, the nationalists reach a satisfactory agreement with the Western Powers on the greater political issues, the position of the minorities will be proportionately eased, and it may even be possible for the minorities to maintain special non-political relations with their co-religionists in the West without incurring the hostility of the nationalists.

(iii) Nationalism has not yet decided its relation to Islam and to the past. If Arab and Egyptian nationalism should become essentially Islamic movements, giving the Arab Christians at best an inferior position on the margin of the national community, then the status of the religious minorities cannot be improved. Equally, if it adopted a racial basis the linguistic minorities could not expect any amelioration of their lot. It is possible, however, that nationalism will dissociate itself from religion, not by denying (which would be absurd) that there is any connexion between the Arab nation and Islam, but by admitting that the Christian has a distinctive place in the national community, and one by no means inferior to that of the Moslem. At the same time, it may well preserve its present indifference to racial origins, and be prepared to accept any member of a linguistic minority as a member of the nation provided he enters that community of will and language which constitutes the nation. If these developments take place, then the essential conditions will exist for that process without which the problem cannot be solved: the process of assimilation.

Assimilation

Assimilation does not involve complete uniformity and the abolition of all significant differences. It means, for the Arabic-speaking religious minorities, that they should regard themselves as possessing all the duties of members of the Arab nation, and should indeed insist on being members of the nation as an in-

alienable right and not as a concession made to them by the majority. They should regard themselves as being in their own special way as genuinely Arab as the Sunni Moslems. As a corollary of this they should accept their position as citizens of national states to which they owe loyalty, and should resist the temptation to claim protection or privilege from foreign Powers. They should try to establish relations of trust with the majority, relations too strong to be broken by particular acts of misunderstanding or discrimination.

For the linguistic minorities, assimilation means that they should learn the language of the majority well enough to be able to participate in the life of the State and to share equally the rights and duties of citizens. They need not give up their own language, traditions and ways, but they should not regard their linguistic group as the object of a loyalty which excludes loyalty to the State.

The Copts, the Greek Orthodox Christians and the heterodox Moslems are already a long way on the road to assimilation, and will go further if the majority allows them. The Kurds, Turcomans and Circassians of Syria also may be expected to become Arabized in course of time as so many of their fellow-nationals have done in the past. It seems probable that the Armenian question will be solved by emigration of the majority of Armenians to the U.S.S.R. There remain two communities which are likely to resist assimilation : the Maronites in Lebanon and the Kurds in Iraq. Will their problem be solved by the grant of autonomy ?

Autonomy

In general, autonomy is not a permanent solution of such problems. It tends to be a first step either to complete independence or to closer union. In certain circumstances, moreover, it may be a danger to the State within which the autonomous province exists, or to its neighbours.

The question of autonomy is most urgent and important in regard to the Kurds of Northern Iraq. It seems unlikely that full autonomy could be given them in any predictable future : first, because of their own internal divisions, and secondly, because Turkey and Iran would almost certainly object. The immediate necessity, as has been said, is to raise their standard of living and education and accustom them to the idea of government. Until

that has been done, it is impossible to say what should be the ultimate solution of their problem.

Arab Union

How will the establishment of the Arab League affect the problem of minorities ? Some of the more suspicious members of the minorities regard the new development with fear, as tending to increase the Moslem predominance ; while some of the more credulous members of the majority may imagine that it will automatically solve the problem. Both these positions are unjustified. The ties which have been established between the Arab states are so loose as in no way to diminish the local importance of the minorities. They might even improve the situation by making the majority more secure and so less suspicious. In general the influence of this factor is unpredictable but not likely to be so great as some imagine.

Social Change

The solution of the problem cannot be found only in the sphere of politics. The increasing Westernization of social and political life will either help to solve it or at least force it to enter a new phase. The closed community cannot remain closed. Improved communications will end the isolated life of villages and regions. Industry will oblige members of different communities to work side by side preparing the same economic function. Urban life will loosen family ties and will thus indirectly weaken communal loyalties. Members of different sects and races will grow up side by side in school. These processes may not help directly to solve specific political and administrative problems, but they will remove the blind unthinking fears and hatreds which at present seem to make those problems insoluble.

The Spirit of Islam

It would not be wise, however, to place too complete a reliance upon the effects of social change. The externals of social life may change while the inner spirit remains as it was. The whole future development of the Arab countries depends on a change in the spirit of Islam: not its theoretical formulations but the living creative spirit which moulds the life of the Islamic community.

It is customary for a certain group of modern educated Arabs

to regard Islam and Christianity as mere survivors of a dark age, and to look forward to their imminent extinction as the only hope of ending the hatreds and rivalries of communities. This hope is vain. Revealed religion cannot vanish from the world to which it has brought light; and if it could, no doubt men would invent other more cruel gods and give them a more savage worship. It is not in the spread of a common agnosticism in which all distinctions of belief are lost that a solution can be found for the problems expounded in this study. It is not religion which causes hatred, but men's forgetfulness of the duties and limits placed upon them by religion.

There is in Islam a fine equality of all races and colours. All are alike in the spirit of God, all can aspire to any position or vocation. It is true that the Arabs have always tended to regard themselves as a nation which has a special relation to Islam; but this tendency has never been based on racial exclusiveness, for it has always been open for anybody to become an Arab, whatever his origin. This sense of human equality must be strengthened and preserved.

There was also in the original Islam a doctrine of respect and toleration for other religions, if only they had the root of the matter in them and professed faith in God, prophecy and the last Judgement. This doctrine has never been entirely forgotten, but a thousand years of unchallenged Moslem domination have partly obscured it. The toleration which the present-day Moslem professes for Christians and Jews is too often not that of a humble believer for those whom he recognizes as serious seekers of the same truth, but the contemptuous toleration of the strong for the weak. This must be changed, and the doctrine of * People of the Book' with all its implications once more be taken seriously.

It is also essential that the gap between the different Islamic sects should be bridged. Perhaps it cannot be entirely wiped out, since it rests in part upon genuine and profound differences of belief. Shi'ism for example is more than an historical survival; it represents a distinctive point of view. There can, however, be a new sense of community, of unity underlying differences, which will put an end to the bitterness of the past.

A ' Fruitful Tension '

Even if everything possible is done to improve the relations between communities, there must always remain a certain

tension' between men who profess different beliefs on the most fundamental questions, as also between those whose life and thought find expression through different languages. Most usually, as at the present day, this is an unhealthy tension, a relationship largely devoid of respect, understanding and love. It need not be so. It is also possible to conceive of a healthy tension in which those virtues are included : a tension which is not only valuable itself but also fruitful of good results in the moral and intellectual orders.

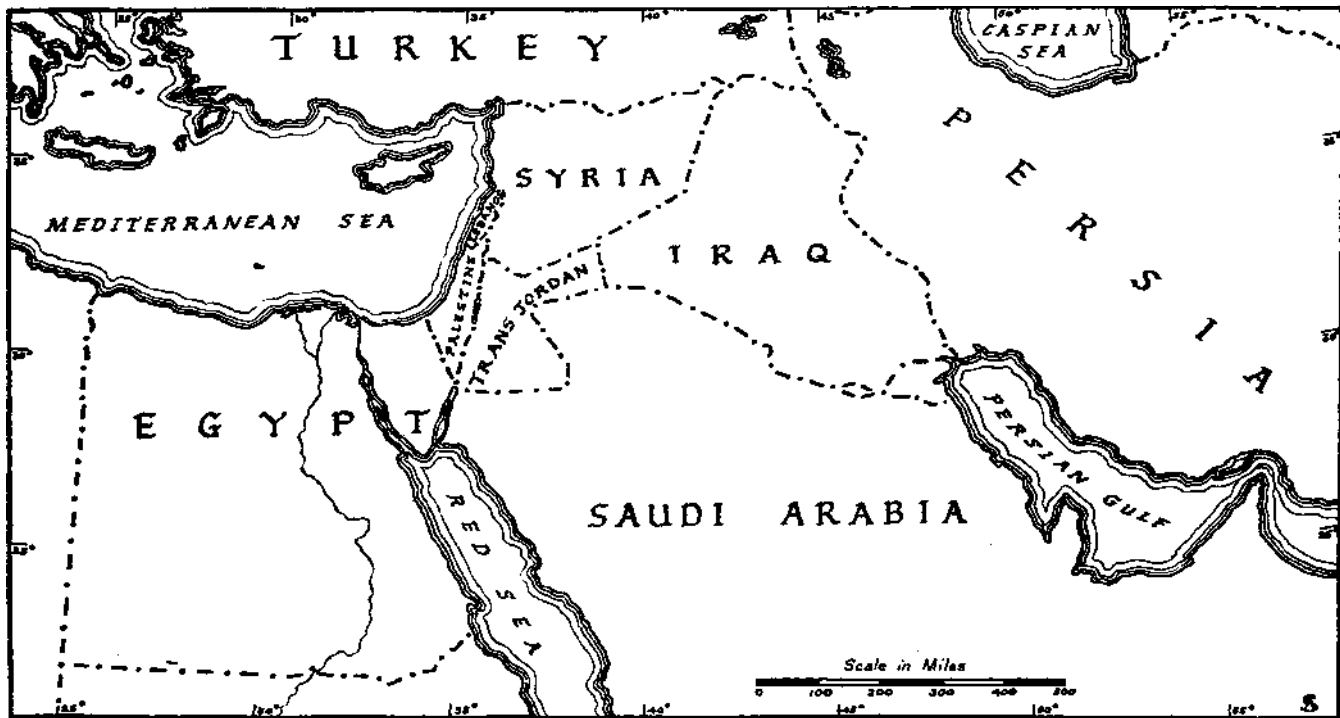
How can this fruitful tension be brought into existence ? Clearly it cannot be created through a denial of oneself and of one's beliefs or loyalties, and by attempting to find a common minimum of truth or of custom on which all can agree. Differences cannot be transcended by being denied, but only by being absorbed into a deeper and more complete unity.

The basis of ' good fellowship ', says M. Maritain, who has written profoundly on this question,¹ is not of the order of the intellect and of ideas, but of the heart and of love. It is mutual love in God and for God which alone can open the heart to the love of all men. Then again it is a sort of humility, of forgiveness and remission.

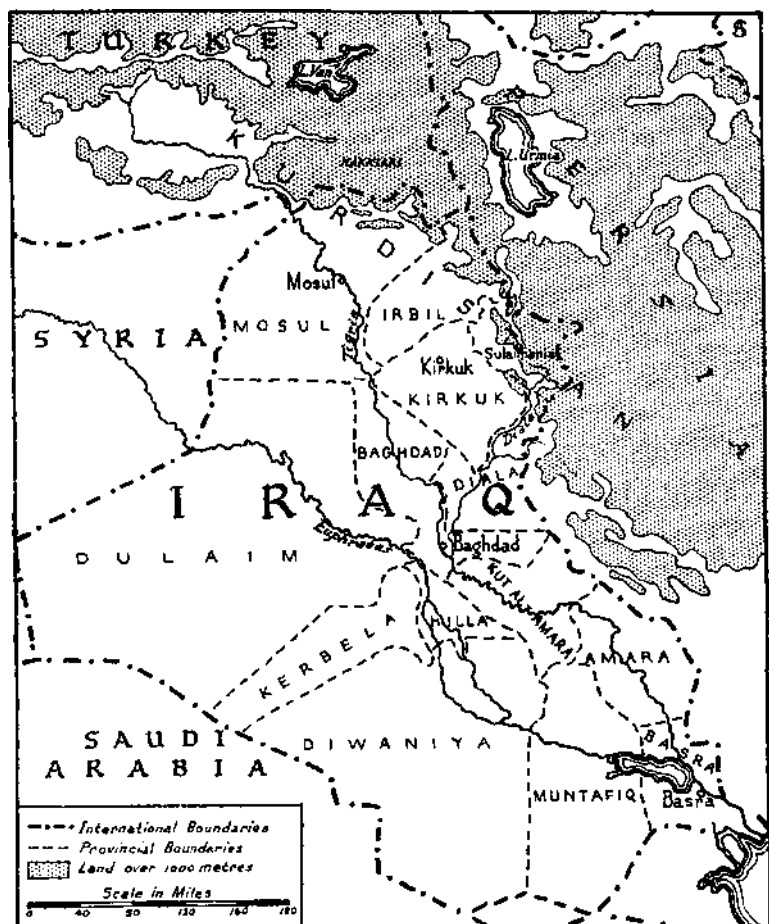
On the level of temporal life, he adds, it is proper that the effort towards union should express itself in common activities, in co-operation for concrete and definite purposes : the common good of the political community to which we belong, or of temporal civilization as a whole. Such common action is possible even if there be no community of doctrine, because men are all bound together by a more primitive and fundamental unity than that of doctrine. All have the same human nature and primordial tendencies. The fundamental likeness between men is the acknowledgement of the fundamental ethical value of the law of brotherly love.

It may seem unprofitable to bring in such considerations at the end of a political study. In the last analysis, however, they alone give cause for hope. The way to a solution of such political problems can only be found in those domains of men's spiritual and moral life from which they take their origin.

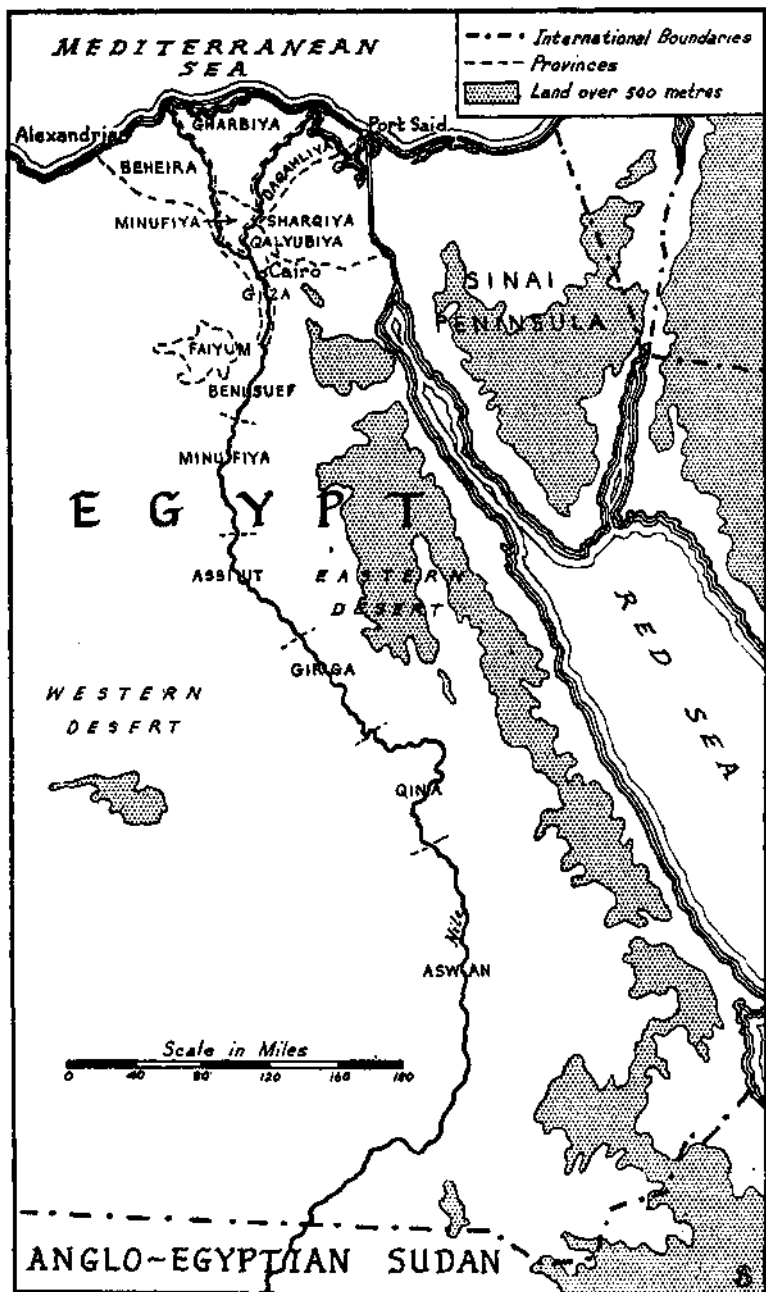
¹ Jacques Maritain, *Redeeming the Time* (London 1943), Ch. 5.



The Eastern Arab World



Iraq



Egypt

INDEX

- Abbasids, 7, 18.
 Abdul-Hamid I I, 27.
 Abu Bekr, 7.
 Acre, 53.
 Adil Arslan, 35.
 Ahl al-Dhimmah, 17, 44.
 Ahl al-Kitab, 17, 18, 20, 21, 124.
 Ahmad, Shaikh of Barzan, 98, 99.
 Alawis:
 distribution of minorities in
 territory of, 76, 77.
 Government, Province or Terri-
 tory of (Latakia), 62, 79-80,
 86, 87, 88, 90, 115.
 Principality, 27.
 in region as a whole, 1, 2, 7-8,
 13, 20, 79, 86, 115.
 in Syria, 12, 14, 76, 77, 85, 88,
 115-
 Aleppo, 76, 83-4.
 Alexandretta, 37, 62, 66, 84.
 Alexandria, 16, 74, 106.
 foreign communities in, 50.
 Governorate of, distribution of
 minorities in, 40, 41, 48, 49,
 50-
 Patriarch of, 4, 5, 44.
 Patriarchate of, 3.
 Ali ibn abu Talib, 7.
 Ali Mahir Pasha, 42, 43.
 Amadia, 102, 104.
 America, 24, 25, 104.
 American University in Lebanon,
 67.
 Amirs of Lebanon, 28.
 Amman, Caucasian Settlements at,
 59-
 Anatolia, 15.
 Anatolia, Eastern, *see* Kurdistan.
 Anglicans, 6, 52.
 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, 42.
 Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, 1930, 97, 101.
 Ansariya, Jebel, 79.
 Antioch, 16.
 Patriarch of, 4, 5, 6.
 Patriarchate of, 3, 4.
 Antonius, George, 35.
 Apostolic Delegates, 5.
 Arab Asia, 71, 94.
 Arab Christians, 30, 35, 121.
 in Lebanon, 67.
 in Palestine, 55-7.
 in Syria, 81-3, 86.
 in Transjordan, 59.
 Arab Higher Committee, 57.
 Arab League, 95, 123.
 Arab Moslems :
 in Palestine, 55-6.
 in Syria, 77.
 Arab nationalism, nationalists, 30,
 31, 32, 34-5, 57, 61, 67, 73,
 81, 85, 86-7, 104, 109, 120,
 121.
 Arab States, League of, 74, 106.
 Arabi Pasha, 31.
 Arabia, 16, 45.
 Arabian Peninsula, 15.
 Arabic-speaking Christians, of
 Lebanon, 31.
 Arabs, 18, 19, 67.
 in Iraq, 38, 116.
 in Syria, 35, 81.
 in Turkey, 35.
 Aramaic, 11.
 Armenia, 84.
 Armenian Catholics, 2.
 Church, 6, 31.
 in Iraq, 103.
 in Lebanon, 63.
 in Syria, 76.
 Armenian Christians :
 in Palestine, 57.
 in Syria, 80.
 Armenian language, 11.
 Armenian nationalism, nationalists,
 36-7, 84.
 Armenian Orthodox (Gregorians),
 2, 49.
 Church, 5, 26.
 in Iraq, 103.
 in Lebanon, 63.
 in Palestine, 52.
 in Syria, 76.
 Patriarchs of, 5.
 Armenian Protestants, 2.
 Armenian Republic, 37, 118.
 Armenian S.S.R., 5, 11, 37, 84, 96,
 107, 118.

- Armenians, 13, 25, 37, 107, 118, 122.
 in Caucasus, 14.
 in Egypt, 24, 29, 43, 49, 50.
 in Iraq, 103.
 in Lebanon, 12, 34-5, 37, 66-7, 69.
 in Persia, 14.
 in Syria, 12, 34-5, 37, 80, 83-4, 89.
- Arslan, Adil, 35.
 Arslan family, 66.
 Ashkenazi Jews, 10.
 Asia Minor, 11, 37.
 Assiut, Province of, 40, 41.
 Assyrian Levies, 101.
 Assyrians, v, 4, 107, 118.
 in Iraq, 34, 91, 99-103.
 in Syria, 80-1.
- Aswan, Province of, 40.
 Atlantic Charter, 107.
 Atrash, 78, 79.
 Austrian Government, 24.
 Azhar, Al, 43.
- Bab, 9.
 Baban family, 96.
 Babylon, Patriarch of, 6.
 Badr Khan Bey, 27, 85.
 Baghdad, 5, 16, 91, 92, 96, 98, 100, 101, 104, 116.
 Baha'is, 2, 9.
 in Palestine, 52, 58.
 in Persia, 14.
- Baqubah, 100.
 Baradai, James, 5.
 Barzan, 98, 99.
 Bashir, Amir, 28.
 Basra, 16, 91, 92, 104.
 Beduins, 76, 80, 81, 117.
 Beersheba, 53.
 Beheira, Province of, 40.
 Beirut, 5, 6, 26, 31, 37, 68, 69, 72.
 Armenians in, 66, 69.
 Druzes in, 69.
 Greek Orthodox and Catholics in, 66, 69.
 Kurds in, 85.
 Maronites in, 69.
 Muhafazat of, 63.
 Sunni Moslems in, 65.
- Beisan, sub-district of Palestine, 53-
 Bekr Sidqi, 105.
 Beni Suef, Province of, 40.
- Bethlehem, 55.
 Biqa', Muhafazat of, 63, 66, 69.
 Bludan, Pan-Arab Conference of, 1937, 83.
 Brazil, 102.
 British :
 in Egypt, 29, 32, 33, 45, 47, 48.
 Government, 24, 101.
 Mandate for Iraq, 96, 97, 102, 103.
 troops in Lebanon, withdrawal of, 74.
- British Guiana, 102.
 Bulgaria, 23.
 Butrus Pasha Ghali, 29.
 Byzantium, 18, 44.
- Cairo, 5, 6, 16, 26, 31, 41, 106.
 Cairo, Governorate of :
 distribution of minorities in, 40, 41, 48, 49, 50-
 foreign communities in, 50.
- Caliphate, 19, 27.
 Canal Zone, Governorate of, 40, 41, 48.
- Catholic literature in French language, 26.
 Catholic Missions, 21, 67, 68.
 Catholics, Chaldaean, *see under* Chaldaean Catholics.
 Catholics in Syria, 88.
 Catroux, General, 73, 89.
 Caucasian dialects, 11.
- Caucasians :
 Circassians, Chechens, 1, 12.
 in Palestine, 52.
 in Transjordan, 59.
 in U.S.S.R., 14.
- Caucasus, 107.
 Armenians in, 14, 37.
- Central Asia, 15.
 Central Asiatic regions of U.S.S.R., 14.
- Chalcedon, Council of, 4, 5.
 Chaldaean Catholics, 2.
 Church, 6.
 in Iraq, 103.
 in Lebanon, 63.
 in Syria, 103.
- Chechens, 12.
- Christian Churches, 26.
 Christian communities, 1-2, 3-4, 106-7.
 adoption of Western habits, 24, 25, 26.

- Christian communities—*contd.*
 in Egypt, 21, **40, 41, 43, 50, 51.**
 in **Iraq, 21, 38, 91, 93, 103-4.**
 Kurdish-speaking, **85.**
 in Lebanon, **14, 21, 28, 31, 66,**
 67, 68, 69, **106.**
 and millet-system, 20, 21.
 Moslem **treatment of, in Ottoman**
 Empire, 20, 21, 23, 24, 27.
 number of, in each country, 12-
 3.
 number of, in region **as a whole,**
 13.
 in Palestine, 21, 52, 54.
 rights in Palestine under Order-
 in-Council, 54.
 in Syria, 21, 77, 80, 81, 83, 88.
 in Transjordan, 59, 60.
 in Turkey, 35.
- Christian Spiritual Councils (in
 Iraq), 93.
- Christians of St. John, *see under*
 Mandaeans.
- Christians, Syriac-speaking, **11.**
 in Ottoman Empire, 20.
- Cilicia, 37.
- Circassians, 12, 58, 59, 60, 85, 86,
 122.
- Committee of Union and Progress,
 30.
- Communism, 37, 120.
- Congregation of Propaganda, 6.
- Congregationaiists, 6.
- Constantinople, 20.
 Council of, 5.
 Patriarch of, 6.
 Patriarchate of, 3, 6.
- Coptic Catholics, 2.
 Bishop of, 6.
 Church, 6, 43, 44, 47-
 language, 45.
- Coptic Orthodox, 1.
 Church in Egypt, 5, 43, **44, 47-**
 Patriarchate, 47.
- Copts, v, 114-5, 122.
 in Egypt, 12, 18, 21, 24, 29, 32,
 41, 43, 44-5-
 number of in region as a whole,
 13.
- Crimea, 14.
- Damascus, 16, 28, 69, 79, 81, 90.
 distribution of minorities in, 76.
 Government of, 87.
 Jews **in, 84.**
- Damascus—contd.**
 Kurds **in, 85.**
 University of, **82.**
- Damietta, Governorate of, 40.**
- Daqahliya, Province of, 40.**
- Darazi, 8.**
- Devil-worshippers, see under Ya-**
zidis.
- Diala, 95, 104.**
- Druze, Jebel, *see under* Jebel
 Druze.
- Druze Revolt, 1925, 86.
- Druzes, 1, 7, 8-9, 27, 77-8, 86,
 115.
 in Lebanon, 12, 20, 24, 28, 63,
 66, 68.
 in Palestine, 52, 57-8.
 in Syria, 12, 14, 76, 115.
- East Africa, 14.
- Eastern Congregation, 6.
- Eastern Patriarchates, 3, 4.
- Eastern Uniates, 24.
- Egypt, 1, 4, 16, 19, 34, 40-51, 106,
 111.
 Armenians in, 24, 49.
 British occupation of, 29, 32, 33,
 45, 47, 48.
 Christians in, 21, 50, 51.
 Coptic Orthodox Church in, 5.
 Copts in, 21, 24, 44-8.
 European communities in, 50.
 Greek communities in, 50.
 Italian communities in, 50.
 Jews in, 12, 24, 40, 41, 43, 49-50
 minorities in, total number of,
 12.
 Sunnis in, 13.
 Syrian Christians in, 24, 35.
- Egyptian Constitution, 1923, 41.
 Government, 29, 41, 42.
 Nationalism, 31-2, 34-5, 43, 51,
 120, 121.
- Ephesus, Council of, 4.
- fitats du Levant sous Mandat
 Francais, *see under* Levant
 States.
- Etchmiadzin, Catholicos of, 5.
- Euphrates, 76.
- Europe, 109.
 impact on Ottoman world of,
 23, 25, 27.
- European communities in Egypt,
 50.
- I Powers, 24, 109.

- Faiyum, Province of, 40.
 Faiz al-Khuri, 82.
 Faris al-Khuri, 35, 82.
 Fatimite Caliph of Egypt (Hakim),
 8.
 Feisal, King, 38, 101.
 Fertile Crescent, 11, 94.
 France, 28, 72, 89, 106-7, 111.
 attitude of Kurds to, 85.
 attitude to Druzes, 78.
 Free, 89.
 Mandate over Syria and
 Lebanon, 33, 61-2, 69-70,
 73, 85.
 North African possessions, 62.
 Franco-Arab relations, 73.
 Franco-Lebanese Treaty, 73.
 Franco-Syrian Treaty, 1936, 87,
 88.
 Free France, 89.
 French :
 Catholic missions in Lebanon,
 67.
 encouragement of Kurdish
 nationalism, 80.
 language, 25, 26.
 missions, missionaries, 26, 67,
 81, 83.
 policy in the Jazirah, 81, 98.
 policy regarding Mandate over
 Levant States, 61-2, 69-70,
 73, 77, 85.
 policy in Syria, 86.
 relations with Maronites, 61, 68.
 relations with Ottoman Empire,
 23-4.
 relations with Roman Catholics,
 83.
 relations with Syria, 88, 90.
 relations with Uniates, 61, 83.
 schools, 25, 83.
 troops in Lebanon, withdrawal
 of, 74.
 troops in Syria, 87.

 Galilee, 53.
 Gaza, 53.
 Ghali, Butrus Pasha, 29.
 Gharbiya, Province of, 40.
 Girga, Province of, 40, 41.
 Giza, Province of, 40.
 Great Britain, 28, 32, 33, 34, 38,
 42, 43, 47, 72, 73, 102, 107, 111.
 Greece, 23.
 Greek Catholics, 2.

 Greek Catholics—*contd.*
 Church, 6.
 in Egypt, 48.
 in Iraq, 103.
 in Lebanon, 63, 66, 67.
 in Syria, 76, 80.
 in Transjordan, 59.
 Greek Orthodox, 1, 3-4, 30, 36, 79,
 107, 122.
 Churches, 26.
 in Egypt, 48.
 in Iraq, 103.
 in Lebanon, 12, 63, 66, 67.
 in Palestine, 52, 54, 55.
 in region as a whole, 13.
 in Syria, 12, 76, 80, 81, 83, 88.
 in Transjordan, 59.
 Greek Orthodox Patriarch, 20,
 54-5.
 Greeks, 25, 50.
 Gregorian Church, *see under*
 Armenian Orthodox.
 Guiana, British, 102.
 Gulhane decrees, 1839, 23.

 Haifa, 53, 55, 58.
 Hakim, 8, 9.
 Hakkari District, 99, 100.
 Hama, 76.
 Bishop of, 83.
 Hamadan, 100.
 Hamza, 8.
 Hapsburg Empire, 119.
 Hararis, 50.
 Hatti Himayun, 1856, 23.
 Hauran, 28, 76.
 Hebrew, 10.
 Hebron, 53.
 Heskail, Sassoon, 104.
 Heterodox Moslems, *see tinder*
 Moslems, Heterodox.
 High Commissioner for Palestine,
 54.
 Horns, 5, 76.
 Husain, 7.

 Ibrahim Pasha, 28.
 Ikhwan Al-Muslimin, 44, 50, 106,
 115.
 Imam, 7, 8, 27.
 Imamate, 7, 8.
 India, 14, 15.
 International Justice, Permanent
 Court of, 112.
 Iran, 97, 116, 122.

- Iran—*contd.*
 Kurds in, 38, 115.
 (*See also* Persia).
- Iraq, 1, 33, 38, 81, 91-105, 111, 120.
 Armenian Catholics in, 103.
 Armenian Orthodox in, 103.
 Assyrians in, 4, 34, 91, 99-103.
 Chaldaeans in, 103.
 Christians in, 91, 93, 103-4.
 Greek Catholics in, 103.
 Greek Orthodox in, 103.
 Jews in, 91, 92, 93, 104.
 Kurds in, 13, 14, 33, 34, 38, 91,
 94, 95-9, 115-6, 122.
 Mandaeans in, 91, 92, 105.
 Mandate for, 91.
 number of minorities in, 13.
 Persians in, 91.
 Protestants in, 103.
 Shabak in, 91, 105.
 Shi'i Arabs in, 13.
 Shi'is in, 20, 94, 95.
 Sunni Moslems in, 13, 94, 95.
 Syrian Catholics in, 103.
 Syrian Orthodox in, 103.
 Turcomans in, 20, 91, 105.
 Uniates in, 103.
 Yazidis in, 91, 105.
- Iraqi Army, 101, 102.
 Constitution, 92.
 Government, 33, 92, 94, 96, 97,
 98, 102, 116.
 Levies, 107.
 nationalism, nationalists, 95.
- Irbil, 95, 96.
- Islam, 7, 17-9, 20, 22, 25, 26, 41,
 43, 44, 45, 47, 59, 77, 121, 123-4.
- Islamic sects in Ottoman Empire,
 20.
- Isma'il, 8.
 Isma'ilis, 1, 7, 8, 14.
 in Syria, 76, 85.
 Isma'ilism, Neo-, 8.
- Italian communities in Egypt, 50.
 Italian Government, 24.
- Jacobites, *see under* Syrian Or-
 thodox Church.
- Jaffa, 83, 55-
 Jamil Mardam Bey, 77.
 Janissaries, 19.
- Jazirah, 35, 62, 76, 80-1, 87, 88,
 90, 102, 117-8.
 "Arabs in, 81.
 Christians in, 81.
- Jazirah—*contd.*
 Kurds in, 77, 86, 88.
 Moslems in, 82.
- Jebel Ansariya, 79.
 Jebel Druze, 20, 27, 62, 76, 77-8,
 87, 88, 89.
 Arab Sunnis in, 77, 86.
 Druzes in, 77.
 Government of, 86.
 Greek Orthodox in, 86.
- Jebel Sinjar, 91.
- Jenin, 53.
- Jerash, 59.
- Jerusalem :
 Arab Christians in, 55.
 distribution of minorities in
 district of, 53.
 Patriarchate of, 3, 4.
- Jesuit Université de St. Joseph, 67.
- Jewish Spiritual Councils, in Iraq,
 93-
 Jews, 2, 10, 25, 35, 39, 106-7.
 adoption of Western habits, 24,
 25, 26.
 Ashkenazi, 10.
 in Egypt, 12, 24, 40, 4*. 43,
 49-50, 5i-
 European, 3, 10.
 in Iraq, 13, 91, 92, 93, 104-
 Karaite, 49.
 in Lebanon, 63, 106.
 and millet system, 20, 21.
 Moslem treatment of, in Ottoman
 Empire, 20, 21, 23, 24, 27.
 number of, in region as a whole, 13.
 in Palestine, 12, 52, 55.
 Rabbanite, 10, 49.
 Spanish-speaking, 10.
 in Syria, 76, 84-5.
 Yiddish-speaking, 10.
- Judaism, 10.
- Jumblat, 66.
- Kadhimain, 92.
 Kamil, Mustafa Pasha, 32.
 Karaites, 2, 10, 14, 49.
 Kemalist revolution, 35.
 Kerbela, 92.
 Khabur, Upper, 102.
 Khuri, Faiz al, 82.
 Khuri, Faris al, 35, 82.
 Kirkuk, 91, 95, 96-
 Kurdish autonomy, 96, 116, 122.
 language, 11, 80, 85, 93, 95, 97-
 Moslems in Syria, 80.

- Kurdish National Committee, 31.
 nationalism, 36, 38, 80, 85, 96, 98.
 provinces, 31.
 question in Iraq, 36.
 Kurdistan, 11, 16, 98.
 Kurds, 1, 15, 19, 20, 27, 33, 107, 122.
 French recruitment of, in Syria, 86.
 in Iraq, 3, 13-4, 34, 38, 91, 94, 95-9, 115-6, 122.
 in Persia, 14, 99.
 in region as a whole, 13.
 in Syria, 12, 35, 77, 80, 81, 85-6, 88, 117.
 in Turkey, 14, 35.
 in U.S.S.R., 14.
 Latakia, *see under* Alawis.
 Latakia, town of, 79.
 Latin rite, *see under* Roman Catholics of.
 Lausanne, Treaty of, 96, 97.
 League of Arab States, 74, 106.
 League of Nations, 33, 92, m.
 Committee of Three of, 112.
 Council of, 53, 81, 92, 97, 100, 102.
 Lebanese autonomy, 27-9, 62, 71, 73, 74-
 Chamber of deputies, 70.
 Constitution, 63-4, 70.
 French Treaty, 73.
 Government, 74.
 Moslems, 67.
 nationalism, nationalists, 36-7, 74-
 Republic, 62, 69, 70, 73, 116.
 Lebanon, 1, 6, 16, 24, 38, 57, 63-74, in, 116-7.
 Armenian Catholics in, 63.
 Armenian Orthodox in, 63.
 Armenians in, 34-5, 37, 66-7.
 autonomy of, 27-9, 62, 71, 73, 74-
 Chaldaeans in, 63.
 Christians in, 24, 67, 68, 69, 106.
 Druzes in, 20, 63, 66, 68, 69.
 French mandate for, 33, 61, 69-70.
 Greater, 68, 69, 74.
 Greek Catholics in, 63, 66, 67, 69.
 Lebanon—*contd.*
 Greek Orthodox, 63, 66, 67, 69.
 High Commissioner for, 64.
 independence of, 34, 37, 61, 62, 70, 73, 74-
 Jews in, 63.
 Maronites in, 14, 24, 34, 63, 65, 67, 68, 69, 122.
 Moslems in, 14, 63, 67, 68.
 Protestants in, 63.
 Roman Catholics (Latin Rite) in, 63.
 Sanjaq of, 28, 29, 31, 69, 72.
 Shi'is in, 63, 65-6, 68, 69.
 Small, 68.
 Sunnis in, 13, 14, 63, 65, 68, 69, 72.
 Syrian Catholics in, 63.
 Syrian Orthodox in, 63.
 withdrawal of British and French troops from, 74.
 Lebanon, Mount, Muhafazat of, 63.
 Lebanon, North, Muhafazat of, 63.
 Lebanon, South, Muhafazat of, 63.
 Levant States, 61-2, 73.
 Levantine bourgeoisie, 25, 36.
 Linguistic and racial minorities, 10-2.
 London, 57.
 Lydda, 53.
 Maccabees, 10.
 Mahir, Ali Pasha, 42, 43.
 Mahmud, Shaikh, 96, 97, 98.
 Majalis Hasbiyah, 41,
 Majid Mustafa, 99.
 Majlis milli, 41.
 Makram Ebeid, 35, 44, 47, 48.
 Maliks, 99.
 Mamlukes, 19.
 Mandaeans, 2, 9.
 in Iraq, 91, 92, 105.
 Mandate, French, for Syria and Lebanon, *see under* France, French.
 Mandate for Iraq, *see under* Iraq.
 Mandate for Palestine, *see under* Palestine Mandate.
 Mandate for Transjordan, *see under* Transjordan Mandate.
 Mardam Bey, Jamil, 77.
 Maritain, M., 119, 125.
 Maronites, 2, 5.
 Church, 6, 65.
 in Egypt, 48.

- Maronites—*contd.*
 in Lebanon, 12, 14, 24, 28, 34-5,
 63, 65, 67, 68, 69, 122.
 Patriarch of, 65.
 relations with French Govern-
 ment, 61.
 in Syria, 34~5, 76.
 Mar Shimun, 4, 99, 101.
 Mawali, 18.
 Mediterranean basin, 15.
 Mehmet, Sultan, 20.
 Melkite Church, 44.
 Mesopotamia, 4.
 Middle East, 15, 17, 120.
 Midhat Pasha, 30.
 Millet System, 20-1, 23, 41, 64,
 65, 113-4, 119.
 Minia, Province, 40, 41.
 Minorities, list of, 1-2.
 figures of principal, in each
 country, 12-3.
 in region as a whole, 13.
 Minufiya, Province, 40.
 Misr al-Fatat, 50.
 Mission Laf que, 82.
 Missionaries, 67.
 Mongols, 15, 99.
 Monophysites, 4-5, 18, 44.
 Monotheite doctrine, 5.
 Montenegro, 23.
 Moslem Arab nationalists, 72.
 Moslem communities, 6-9.
 in Egypt, 40, 45.
 in Lebanon, 14.
 in Ottoman Empire, 20, 27.
 number of linguistic minorities
 in region as a whole, 13.
 Moslem religious law, *see under*
 Shariah.
 Moslems, 6-9, 17, 18, 21, 24, 25,
 26, 28, 29, 32, 114-
 in Egypt, 39, 40, 42, 43, 45, 48,
 48.
 in Iraq, 103.
 in Lebanon, 14, 63, 67, 68.
 in Ottoman Empire, 20, 27.
 in Palestine, 52, 55.
 in Syria, 77, 81, 86.
 number of linguistic minorities
 in region as a whole, 13.
 Moslems, Heterodox, 1, 13, 69, 122.
 Mosul, 6, 91, 92, 95, 98, 100, 102,
 103, 104.
 Vilayet of, 96, 97.
 Liwa, 98.
 Muawiya ibn abu Sufian, 7.
 Muftis, 19.
 Muhammad, 7.
 Muhammad Ali, 29, 44, 45, 48, 50.
 Mulla Mustafa, 99.
 Murshid, Suleiman, 90.
 Musa, 8.
 Mustafa Kamil Pasha, 32.
 Mustafa, Majid, 99.
 Mustafa, Mulla, 99.
 Mutran, 49.
 Nablus, 53.
 Nahas Pasha, 44, 48.
 Nansen Office, 66.
 Native Tribunals (in Egypt), 42.
 Naur, 59.
 Nazareth, 53, 55.
 Nejf, 91.
 Nestorians (Assyrians), 2, 4, 18, 99.
 Church, 4.
 Patriarch of, 4.
 in Syria, 76.
 Nile, 16, 46.
 Nile-worship, 46.
 Nimr, 49.
 North African possessions of
 France, 62.
 Northern Iraq, 21.
 Northern Lebanon, 21, 28.
 Northern Syria, 20.
 Nubar Pasha, 29, 49.
 Nusairis, *see under* Ala wis.
 Orontes Valley, 102.
 Orthodox Eastern Church, 3.
 Orthodox subjects of Ottoman
 Empire, 24.
 Ottoman Constitution, 1876, 23.
 Empire, 1, 19-20, 23, 24, 29-31,
 33, 34, 37, 96, 119-
 Family Code, 64.
 Government, 26, 28, 31, 58, 60,
 79, 109.
 Sultan, 99.
 Turks, 20, 33.
 Padishah, *see under* Sultan of
 Ottoman Empire.
 Palestine, 1, 38, 52-8, 104, i u, 120.
 Anglicans in, 52.
 Arab Christians in, 55-7.
 Arab Moslems in, 55-6.
 Armenian Christians in, 57.
 Armenian Orthodox in, 52.

- Palestine—*contd.*
 Baha'is in, 52, 58.
 Caucasians in, 52.
 Christians in, 21, 52.
 distribution of minorities in, 12,
52.
 Druzes in, 52, 57-8.
 Government, 55.
 Greek Orthodox in, 52, 54-5.
 High Commissioner for, 54.
 Jews in, 52, 55.
 Mandate for, 33, 52-4, 59.
 Moslems in, 52, 55.
 Order in Council, 1922, 53-4.
 Roman Catholics in, 52.
 Royal Commission on, 57.
 Samaritans in, 52, 58.
 Shi'is in, 52, 57-8.
 Sunnis in, 13, 52, 58.
 Uniates in, 52.
- Pan-Arab Conference of Btudan,
 1937, 83.
- Pan-Arabism, 95, 98.
- Pan-Islamism, 27.
- Paris, 31.
- Patriarchates :
 Eastern, 3, 4.
 Western, 3.
 People of the Book ', 17, 18, 20,
21, 124.
- Permanent Court of International
 Justice, 112.
- Permanent Mandates Commission,
 53-
 Persia, 4, 15, 96, 99.
 Armenians in, 14.
 Baha'is in, 9, 14, 58.
 Kurds in, 14, 38.
 Shi'is in, 14.
 Turcomans in, 14.
 (*See also* Iran.)
- Persian Government, 99.
 Gulf, 15.
 language, 10.
 plateau, 15.
- Persians, 19.
 in Iraq, 91.
- Polish Silesia, 113.
- Polytheists, 17.
- Porte, *see under* Sublime Porte.
- Presbyterians, 6.
 'Protected people ', 17, 44.
- Protestants, 2, **6.**
 in **Iraq, 103.**
 in **Lebanon, 63.**
- Protestants—*contd.*
 in Syria, 76.
 in Transjordan, 59.
- Qadis, 19.
- Qalyubiya, Province, 40.
- Qattawis, 50.
- Qina, Province, 40, 41.
- Quran, 9, 18.
- Rabbanite sect, 2, 49.
- Ramallah, 53, 55.
- Ramie, 53.
- Rashid Ali, 104.
- Red Sea, 15.
- Red Sea Coast district, 40.
- Religious Community Councils
 Law, 1938, Transjordan, 59.
- Riza Shah, 38.
- Rolos, 50.
- Roman Catholic Church, 5, 57.
 missionaries, 47.
 Patriarch in Jerusalem, 5.
 Patriarchate, 4.
- Roman Catholics (Latin rite), 2.
 in Lebanon, 63.
 in Ottoman Empire, 24.
 in Palestine, 52, 57.
 in Syria, 76, 83.
 in Transjordan, 59.
- Royal Air Force, 98, 102.
- Royal Commission on Palestine,
 1937, 57.
- Rumania, 23.
- Russia, 36, 98, 100.
- Russian Government, 24.
- Ruwanduz, 102.
- Sabaeans, *see under* Mandaeans.
- Safad, 53.
- Saida, 65.
- Salama Musa, 47.
- Samaria, 53.
- Samaritans, 2, 10.
 in Palestine, 52, 58.
- Samarra, 92.
- Sanjaq of Lebanon, 28, 29, 31, 69,
 72.
- Sarruf, 49.
- Sassoon Heskail, 104.
- Sephardic Jews, 10.
- Serbia, 23.
- Sèvres, Treaty of, 38, 96, 97.
- Shabak, 2, 9.
 in Iraq, 91, **105.**

- Shaikh Adi, 9.
 Shaikh Ahmad of Barzan, 98.
 Shaikh Mahmud, 96, 97, 98.
 Shakib Arslan, 35.
 Shammar, 80.
 Shariah, 19, 64, 75, 77, n.o.
 Sharqiya, Province, 40.
 Shi'ah, 7.
 Shihab Amirs, 28.
 Shi'i Holy Cities, 91-2.
 Shi'is, 1, 2, 7, 8.
 in India, 14.
 in Iraq, 3, 13-4, 20, 94.
 in Lebanon, 12, 63, 65-6, 68.
 in Ottoman Empire, 20.
 in Palestine, 52, 57-8.
 in Persia, 14.
 in region as a whole, 13.
 in Syria, 76.
 Shimun, Mar, 4, 99, 100.
 Sidqi, Bekr, 105.
 Sinai Province, 40.
 Smyrna, 36.
 Southern Desert Province, 40.
 Soviet Armenia, 5, n, 37, 84, 118.
 Stamboul, 29, 31, 36.
 Statutes formalizing Lebanese
 Autonomy, 28.
 Sublime Porte, 21, 23, 28.
 Sudanese Government, 29.
 Suez, Governorate of, 40.
 Sulaimania, 95, 96, 97.
 Suleiman Murshid, 87, 90.
 Sultan, of Ottoman Empire, 19,
 30.
 Sunni Moslems, 1, 6-7, 61, 78, 79,
 94, 122.
 in Egypt, 52.
 in Iraq, 3, 13-4, 38, 94.
 in Lebanon, 14, 63, 65, 66, 68,
 69, 72.
 in Ottoman Empire, 22.
 in Palestine, 58.
 in Syria, 76, 77, 85.
 Sur, 66.
 Suvvaylah, Caucasian settlements
 at, 59.
 Syria, 1, 27, 28, 38, 72, 75-90, 96,
 101, 102, 111.
 Alawis in, 13, 14, 77, 85, 88, 115.
 Arab Christians in, 81-3, 86.
 Arab Moslems in, 77.
 Arab nationalism in relations
 with France, 88.
 Assyrians in, 4, 80-1.
 I. Syria—*contd.*
 Beduins in, 76, 81.
 Catholics in, 88.
 Chaldaeans in, 76, 80.
 Christians in, 21, 77, 81, 85, 88,
 106.
 Circassians in, 85.
 Druzes in, 14, 76, 115.
 French Mandate for, 33, 61, 80.
 Greater, 38.
 Greek Catholics in, 76, 80.
 Greek Orthodox in, 76, 80, 83,
 88.
 High Commissioner for, 75, 77.
 independence of, 61, 83, 89.
 Isma'ilis in, 76, 85.
 Jews in, 76.
 Kurdish Moslems in, 80.
 Kurds in, 33, 38, 77, 80, 81,
 85-6, 88.
 Maronites in, 34-5, 76.
 Moslems in, 77, 86.
 number of minorities in, 12.
 Protestants in, 76.
 refugees from Turkey in, 35, 38.
 relations with France, 88, 90.
 Roman Catholics (Latin rite) in,
 76, 83.
 Shi'is in, 76.
 Sunnis in, 13, 76, 77.
 Syrian Catholics in, 76, 80.
 Syrian Orthodox in, 76, 80.
 Turcomans in, 85.
 Uniates in, 83.
 Yazidis in, 76.
 Syriac language, 11, 103.
 Syriac-speaking Christians in
 Ottoman Empire, 20.
 Syrian Catholics, 2, 3.
 Church, 6.
 in Egypt, 48.
 in Iraq, 103.
 in Lebanon, 63.
 in Syria, 76, 80.
 Patriarch, 81.
 Syrian Christians, 25, 35.
 in Egypt, 24, 29, 48.
 Syrian Constitution, 75, 88.
 French Treaty, 1936, 87, 88.
 Government, 88.
 national movement, 82, 83, 84.
 national party, 38.
 Republic, 62, 87.
 Syrian Revolution, 1925, 85.
 Syrian Orthodox (Jacobites), 1, 2, 3.

- Syrian Orthodox (Jacobites)—*contd.*
 Church, 5.
 in Egypt, 48.
 in Iraq, 103.
 in Lebanon, 63.
 in Syria, 76, 80.
 Patriarch, 88.
 Syrians in Egypt, 29, 43, 48, 49, 50.
- Talmud, to, 49.
 Tappouni, Cardinal, 81, 88.
 'Tashnak', 84.
 Taurus, 85.
 Tiberias, 53.
 Tigrane Pasha, 49.
 Tigris, 102.
 Transjordan, 1, 33, 38, 59-60, 111.
 Arabic-speaking Christians in, 59.
 Caucasians, Circassians in, 59, 60.
 Christians in, 59, 60.
 Greek Catholics in, 59.
 Greek Orthodox in, 59.
 Mandate for, 59.
 minorities in, 12, 59-60.
 Protestants in, 59.
 Religious Community Councils Law, 1938, 59.
 Roman Catholics (Latin rite) in, 59-
 Sunnis in, 13.
 Tribunals of Personal Status, 42.
 Tripoli, 65.
 Tulkarm, 53.
 Turcoman principality, 27.
 Turcomans, 1, 20, 122.
 in Central Asiatic regions of U.S.S.R., 14.
 in Iraq, 13, 91, 105.
 in Persia, 14.
 in Turkey, 14.
 in Syria, 85.
 Turkey, 81, 84, 85, 97, 99, 100, 116, 122.
 Arab nationalist movement in, 35.
 Arabs in, 35.
 cession of Alexandretta to, 62, 66, 84.
 Christians in, 35.
- Turkey—*contd.*
 Kurds in, 14, 33, 35, 38, 96, 115.
 Turcomans in, 14.
 Turkish Government, 35, 97, 100.
 Kurdistan, 96.
 language, 10, 19, 93.
 nationalism, 30;
 State, 35.
 Turks, 15, 19, 29, 79, 96, 100.
- Ulema, 75, 77.
 Umar, 7.
 Umayyads, 7.
 Uniate Churches, 5-6.
 Uniate Christians, 26, 61, 69.
 in Iraq, 103.
 in Palestine, 52.
 in Syria, 83.
 number of, in region as a whole, 13-
 Union and Progress, Committee of, 30.
 United Nations Organization, 61, 106.
 United States, 72.
 University de St. Joseph (Jesuit), 67.
 University, American, in Lebanon, 67.
 Urmiyah, 100.
 Urmiyah, Lake, 99.
 Uthman, 7.
 U.S.S.R., 14, 36, 37, 84, 85, 107, 122.
- Wadi Sir, 59.
 Wafd, 43, 44, 47, 48, 115.
 Wali, 19.
 Waqfs, 52, 54, 93-
 Western Desert Province, 40.
 Western Patriarchate, 3.
 Western Powers, 121.
- Yazidis, 2, 9, 76, 85.
 in Iraq, 91, 105.
 Yiddish, 11.
- Zaidan, 49.
 Zaidis of Al-Yemen, 7.
 Zionism, 50, 55, 57, 84, 85, 104.
 Zionists, 35, 38, 84, 104.

